A HISTORY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE

ARMS OF GLOUCESTER

W. H. WESTON

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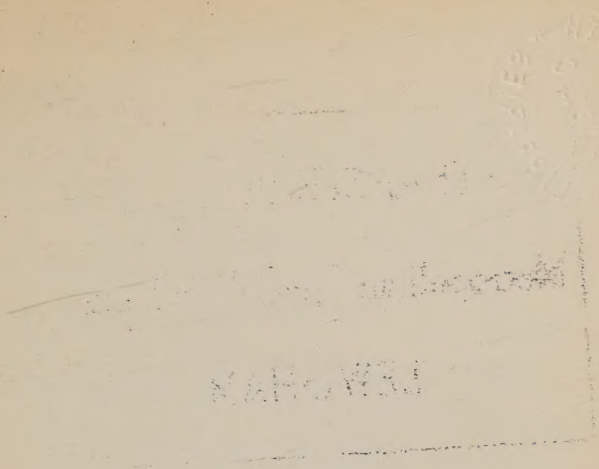

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OXFORD COUNTY HISTORIES

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

By W. H. WESTON

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WITH FORTY-TWO ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS

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PREFACE

In accordance with the present trend of educational thought, this book aims at furnishing, in simple language, an account of the chief events in the history of Gloucestershire in their connexion with the wider history of our country. Obviously, however, the space allotted to any period or event must, in many cases, be very disproportionate to the space which would be given to the same period or event in a general history of England. As a consequence the earlier periods of history are, in this volume, generally more fully dealt with than are later times, because of the relatively greater importance of Gloucestershire during the early and middle ages.

There will, I believe, be general agreement with the following words from the 'Circular of the Board of Education on the Teaching of History': 'It is far more important that pupils should leave school with their eyes trained to observe the historical remains which are to be found in almost every part of England, than that they should attempt to remember the whole of the political history, much of which they cannot understand.' In accordance with this principle, I have devoted a considerable amount of space to the most notable of the historic remains in the county, from those of prehistoric times down through the recognized great periods of architecture. I trust that, though architectural details have necessarily been treated only in the broadest and

simplest outline, sufficient has been included to enable the scholar, with the assistance of the illustrations and the guidance of the teacher, to identify the leading features of the great styles of building.

Most of the illustrations in this book have been reproduced from old prints and will, I trust, be found both interesting and of considerable educational value. In this connexion I have to acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr. A. C. Dunn of the Cheltenham Library.

It is, perhaps, scarcely necessary in a book of this character to refer to the numerous authorities consulted, from the works of Sir Robert Atkyns and other old county historians down to books of recent date. I should, however, like to express my special obligations to Mr. G. B. Witt's *Archaeological Map and Handbook*, to Mr. F. A. Hyett's *Gloucester*, and to the Rev. W. Hunt's *Bristol*.

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CHAPTER I

IN THE BEGINNING

Long before written history begins, man made his home in the land we now call Gloucestershire. From the camps within which he sheltered himself, the burial mounds which he raised in honour of his dead, and the weapons which he fashioned, we may gather some few glimpses of the manner of man he was and of the kind of life he led.

But, from the remote days of these first dim figures upon the pages of history down to the present day, the lives of the dwellers in our county, as elsewhere, have been largely shaped and influenced by the slow processes of Nature which fashioned the land for the service of man. The herdsman of the Cotswolds, the fruit-grower of the Vale of Severn, the collier of the Forest of Dean, all alike owe the nature of their occupations to the slow and still-continuing changes which began countless ages before man appeared upon the scene. Even the kind of houses which they inhabit, whether the stone houses of the Cotswold or the brick-built buildings of the vale, is determined by the nature of the deposits laid down in the dim childhood of the earth.

In some parts of our country ancient rocks formed under the influence of great heat come to the surface. In Gloucestershire, however, all the rocks, or earth-layers, are 'sedimentary', that is, they have been formed by the gradual settling down of sand or mud or pebbles as a sediment at the bottoms of seas or other bodies of water. These water-formed rocks are of many different kinds for, in the course of the ages during which they were deposited, constant changes were taking place. Sometimes the land rose, the beds of seas became dry land, and were then scarped into hills and valleys by the rivers. Sometimes, on the other hand, the land sank, the waters slowly flowed in over the former dry

land, and new rock-layers of sediment were laid down upon the worn surfaces of the older rocks.

The layers thus deposited through the ages do not lie evenly upon one another. The earth's crust is subject to many strains and stresses, some so violent as to be felt as earthquakes, others so slow as only to be made out by very careful observation. The rock-layers have in many places been so twisted and crumpled by these strains and stresses that it is difficult to make out their original arrangement. In general, however, we may regard the rock-layers in our country as tilted in such a manner that the oldest rocks come to the surface in the west of England, while, as we proceed eastward, we pass across areas of rock-layer more and more recent in formation.

As we might expect from the position of our county, the rock-layers of Gloucestershire occupy roughly an intermediate position in the great series. The most ancient rocks in Gloucestershire occur at May Hill and in a small area about Tortworth. When the bed of the ancient sea, upon which these May Hill rocks were laid down, rose above the waters and became dry land, great inland lakes were left. The shore line of one of these passed through our county, and earth-layers laid down in the waters of the great lake appear at the surface. So through countless ages the level of the land altered again and again. At one time the hard blue-grey limestone, which is sometimes used to mend the roads in the county, was deposited. At another, the stone which, from the use to which it was often put, is called the millstone grit, was formed. Then upon land once again above the level of the sea there flourished in a warm moist climate dense forests of strange vegetation. Overlaid in process of time by other deposits when the land had again sunk below the waters, the remains of those ancient forests give us the coal of the Forest of Dean and of the Bristol coalfield.

The waters which rise in the mineral springs of Cheltenham are saline with the salt of a great inland sea or lake, not unlike the Caspian Sea or Sea of Aral of the present day.

The remains of the hideous and monstrous reptiles found in the Lias, which covers so great a part of the eastern side of the Vale of Severn, tell of another age and of other conditions.

Again, the highest part of the county, the Cotswold tableland, offers on every side plain evidence that the rocks, now hundreds of feet above sea-level, were laid down on the bed of a sea swarming with life. The walls bounding Cotswold fields are often built of stones almost entirely made up of fossil shells cemented together by the rounded grains of the oolite or roestone. And in nearly every quarry, indeed in the ploughed fields or along the cart tracks, one can scarcely search for a few minutes without finding fossils ; double-valved shells in great abundance ; the ammonites or so-called sea-snakes, which are really the fossils of a kind of nautilus ; the 'thunderbolts' of Gloucestershire boys, which are the remains of ancient cuttlefishes ; sea-urchins and sea-lilies ; and many another strange and beautiful witness in stone to remind us that

> There where the long street roars, hath been
> The stillness of the central sea.
> The hills are shadows, and they flow
> From form to form, and nothing stands ;
> They melt like mist, the solid lands,
> Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

CHAPTER II

THE MAKING OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE

In none of the long series of rocks which make up the surface of our county do we find the slightest trace of the presence of man. Indeed, a vast space of time separates the days in which the oolite rocks of the Cotswolds were laid down from the days when savage man began to build his hut-circles and his earthworks upon the hills. The

space can scarcely be measured, however roughly, in terms of years ; it can only be dimly conceived by considering later deposits which we find in other parts of the land.

But when man did at last appear upon the little space of land we name Gloucestershire, he found the stage set for the continuous drama which we call history, much as we find it set to-day. For him, as for us, the Severn rolled southward to the sea, and her ample vale spread east and west. May Hill and the hills of the Forest of Dean, the foothills of the mountains of Wales, rose westward of the valley. Eastward rose the steep slope of Cotswold, with jutty points and bay-like curves fronting the vale.

The summits of these hills were the home of early man in Gloucestershire. The vale land, marshy from the waters of rivers swollen by rain or choked by beaver-dams, and thickly covered with wolf-haunted forests, was no attractive home for him and his herds. It was, however, a defence against wild enemies across the other side of the valley. Therefore he dwelt upon the broad tableland of Cotswold, and built his earthworks fronting the vale.

Throughout the ages of history our county has fallen into three natural divisions. First, the broad undulating tableland we call the Cotswold Hills, rising gradually from the east and falling suddenly away on the west. Secondly, the broad river valley,

> The Vale of Severn, Nature's garden wide
> By the blue steeps of distant Malvern wall'd.

Thirdly, the beautiful undulating land between Severn and Wye, the Forest of Dean.

This threefold division is due to the action of those forces of nature which scooped out the broad dividing valley. It was at one time believed that the westward edge of the Cotswolds represents the coastline of an ancient sea, the 'Malvern Straits', which rolled between the Cotswolds and the Malverns. Certainly, the steep westward slope of the Cotswolds, with its wide bay-like sweeps and its cliff-crowned spurs thrust out into the valley, makes the theory appear a very natural and reasonable one. Especially is this the case when one stands upon such a promontory

of the uplands as Birdlip Hill, and it chances that the sky above is fair, while the valley below is shrouded in dense white mist. At such a time but little imagination is needed to conceive the wide 'horseshoe of the Cotswolds' to the south as a bay, with Cooper's Hill as its southern and Birdlip Hill its northern headland. Northwards, too, the misty sea runs as a narrowing inlet between Birdlip and the cliffs that crest Crickley Hill. In the far distance the Malvern Hills rise like a coastline, while, near at hand, the outlying Robin's Wood and Churchdown Hills rise like islands above the mist. But attractive though the theory may be, it is now generally believed that the valley has been scarped out by river action which began before the streams took their present courses.

Whatever forces scooped out the broad Severn valley, ranging from ten to twenty miles in width, there can be no doubt that on the southern boundary of the county we have two of the most remarkable examples to be found in England of the action of rivers in cutting their way deeper and deeper through the rocks. Between Gloucestershire and Monmouth the Wye has cut its way through a deep valley bordered by steep cliffs of romantic beauty. 'Its banks,' said the poet Gray, 'are a succession of nameless beauties.' A greater poet, Wordsworth, having in his mind the view of Tintern from the Devil's Pulpit on the Gloucestershire side of the river, addresses the stream as 'O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer through the woods,' and speaks of

> These steep and lofty cliffs,
> That on a wild secluded scene impress
> Thoughts of more deep seclusion, and connect
> The landscape with the quiet of the sky.

Again, on the border between Gloucestershire and Somerset the Avon has cut a mighty gorge. The towering cliffs rise romantically above the ancient town, in more accord, one feels, with the Bristol whence Cabot sailed than with the grime and smoke which modern commerce lays upon the city.

To river-action we owe, too, the steep little valleys through which flow the streams which add much to the

THE GORGE OF THE AVON, 1793

charm and variety of the Cotswolds. Crossing the eastern uplands of our county, we find the prevailing character of the district that of a wide rolling country. Far and wide stretch the downs ; a land somewhat bare in outline perhaps, but full of the charm of distant views and far horizons, and swept by clear, sweet airs. But every now

The Seven Springs. Source of the Thames

and then we drop suddenly from the tableland into a little valley whose sheltered woodlands contrast strongly with the bare 'stone-wall' country. The music of the little trout stream which has cut out the valley accompanies us through pleasant woodlands and pastures, and through ancient towns and villages full of old-world charm and memories of the past.

The Cotswold watershed runs generally near the western edge of the hills. Hence the valleys cut by the rivers flowing westward to the Severn are generally short

compared with those of eastward-flowing rivers. The most striking of the former is the beautiful Stroud Valley, whose steep slopes are mantled with larch plantations or terraced by the houses and gardens of villages.

But the eastward-flowing rivers, clear-running, babbling trout-streams, the head-waters of the Thames, are the characteristic Cotswold streams. Two sources dispute the honour of being the actual source of the Thames, the Seven Springs near Cheltenham and Thames Head near Cirencester. Certainly all the head-waters of the great river lie within our county. The eastern part of the Cotswolds north of the Stroud Valley is scored by parallel channels, through which flow the Churn, the Coln, the Leach, the Windrush, and the Evenlode. Of these, the three first named meet at Lechlade on the extreme south-eastern corner of the county.

Clear Colne and lively Leche go down from Cotteswold's plain
At Lechlade joining hands, come likewise to support
The mother of great Thames.

Each of the three great natural divisions of our county has had its share in shaping the history of Gloucestershire. The pastures of the Cotswolds, intersected by a hundred babbling streams; the lush grazing lands and fruit-laden orchards of the vale, whence come the 'double Gloucester' cheeses and the cider of the county; the woodlands, and the coal and iron of the Forest of Dean have all had important shares in the history of English agriculture and industry.

But the history of Gloucestershire is, to a very large extent, especially the history of the valley of the lower Severn. For many centuries the ample stream whose 'glassy, cool, translucent wave' rolls down

By rushy-fringéd bank
Where grow the willow and the osier dank

was the great barrier between hostile peoples. And when at length the same rule extended to both sides of the river, the obstacle which the stream presented to the passage

The Severn at New Passage (1793)

of an army determined the course of our national history on several occasions. The barrier is especially difficult to cross below Gloucester. There the river rapidly widens out and the channel, almost a desert of sand at low tide, is swept twice a day by the rush of the highest tides in England. Standing by the side of the lower Severn as the tide passes, we see, on the one hand, a great expanse of sand with scanty runlets of water; on the other, a broad inrush of water rapidly advancing with surging crests of foam. Higher up the river the advancing tide is at certain periods heaped up into a great wall of water—the famous Severn bore—six feet or more in height, which rushes up against the seaward-flowing stream.

In very early times there were, indeed, ferries across the lower Severn by which small parties of travellers could cross the estuary. But the river was impassable to armies below Gloucester. There, until quite modern days, the bridge nearest to the sea was situated and hence for long centuries the road to South Wales passed through that city.

But for the barrier between England and South Wales interposed by the Severn, Simon de Montfort might not have fallen at Evesham, the cause of the House of Lancaster might not have been drowned in the blood which dyed the Tewkesbury meadows, and the armies of Charles I might have advanced victoriously upon London.

The river, however, is not only a barrier. It is also a highway leading outwards to the sea and inwards to the fruitful lands of the west-midland counties. Hence it has influenced the peaceful story of our county as much as it has the marchings of armed hosts. Hence, too, three of our most important ancient trading towns grew up on Severn side. Bristol, on the tributary Avon, commanded the seaward gate of the Severn. The tide that fills the estuary rises high and full in the tributary streams of Wye and Avon;

> There twice a day the Severn fills
> The salt sea-water passes by,
> And hushes half the babbling Wye
> And makes a silence in the hills.

These tides filled the Avon from early days with the busy hum of commerce. Flowing, they bore stout ships into the heart of Bristol town, and ebbing carried them out seaward for new voyages and new adventures in many lands. Gloucester again, placed at the crossing of a great land route east and west and a waterway north and south, could not but be a place of importance in peace as in war, a mart for the borderland of England and Wales. Tewkesbury, less important but still a place of thriving trade in ancient days, owed much to its position near the junction of its two rivers, the Severn and the Warwickshire Avon, and prospered on its trade in the produce of their fertile valleys.

CHAPTER III

THE MEN OF THE LONG BARROWS

At a time recent in comparison with the period of the laying down of the main earth-layers in Gloucestershire, but still many tens of thousands of years ago, evidences of the presence of man begin to appear. Over a great part of Europe and of North America are found deposits which must have been laid down during a period of intense cold, a period when the conditions as regards climate must have been much the same over great parts of those continents as they are in the polar regions at the present day. It is in the deposits, which were laid down either after this Glacial or Ice Age had passed away or, perhaps, in some cases during warmer periods which occasionally broke the long reign of Arctic cold, that the first sure evidences of man's presence are found.

These evidences are in the form of rude flint weapons or tools, very roughly and clumsily chipped into shape, but undoubtedly showing signs of human workmanship. The stage in the gradual growth of the civilization of

man, which is marked by the use of rudely fashioned implements of stone, we call the Old Stone Age.

Remains of the Old Stone Age are found in the beds of gravel and brick-earth laid down by ancient rivers, and also in the floors of ancient caves. Such rude stone implements have been found in King Arthur's Cave between Symond's Yat and Monmouth, near the borders of our county. Frequently the flint weapons are found among the bones of the mammoth, the giant ox and the elk which then roamed the land.

To the Old Stone Age there succeeded a stage of progress of which remains are to be found in great abundance in Gloucestershire. The implements were still of stone, but they were so skilfully and, indeed, often beautifully made as to mark a great advance upon the clumsy craftsmanship of the Old Stone Age. Generally, the weapons and implements were still made of flint, which, of all our common stones, can be most readily given a sharp cutting edge. For tools such as hammers other stones were sometimes employed, while the bones of animals and the antlers of deer also furnished serviceable weapons. The implements of the Later Stone Age were not only skilfully fashioned by chipping, they were also sometimes finely ground and polished. In some cases a hole was bored through them to which a handle or haft could be fitted.

Such weapons and implements of the Later Stone Age are extremely numerous in Gloucestershire. Although tens of thousands, probably hundreds of thousands, have been collected, there are still many to be found. Upon the Cotswolds they are often turned up in numbers by the plough and, especially after rain, the flint flakes show up plainly upon the reddish-brown earth. Most of the flints found are mere chips, probably flakes broken off in the process of making an arrow-head or some other implement. Some are rounded masses which may perhaps have been used as sling-stones. Others are rough disks chipped down so as to give a sharp cutting edge. More perfect tools or weapons are also found; long pointed flakes which were probably used as borers, broader flakes

with a sharp edge, which may have been used to scrape the skins of animals or as knives, and others, the sharp edges of which have been notched to form saws.

The finest of the stone weapons found upon the Cotswolds are the flint arrow-heads. These vary a great deal in form. Some are only roughly chipped into shape. Others are rounded like a pointed oval. The most skilfully made are beautifully fashioned with projecting barbs and with a stem to which the shaft of the arrow was fixed.

In most parts of our country where implements of the Stone Age are found, a larger weapon called a celt is frequently discovered. The celt was a stone axe or hatchet and was probably the chief weapon used in hand-to-hand fighting. The fact that few celts have been found upon the Cotswolds has been supposed to show that the men of the Later Stone Age on our hills lived in peace, undisturbed by attacks from hostile tribes.

Early man in our land buried his honoured dead in burial mounds which give us a good deal of information about their builders. Upon the Cotswolds these mounds are far more numerous than in most parts of England. This is, no doubt, partly due to the fact that the Cotswolds were for ages mainly unenclosed pasture and forest land. Hence the old burial mounds escaped being levelled by the plough. But, after allowance has been made for this fact, the number of ancient burial mounds, together with the multitude of worked flints, and the many remains of ancient dwellings found upon the hills, seems to show that the Cotswolds were in very early times a comparatively populous region. These ancient burial mounds are known by their English name as barrows or sometimes by the Latin name tumuli. In Gloucestershire they are frequently locally known as 'tumps', as, for example, 'Hetty Pegler's Tump' at Uley, and the West Tump at Brimpsfield.

Altogether there are some two hundred barrows upon the Cotswolds. In some parts quite a number are found within a small area. Thus, for example, there are nine in one field in the parish of Nether Swell and others within

a short distance of that place, and nineteen in the district immediately around Nailsworth.

A very slight examination of these barrows shows that they are of two distinct kinds. Some are much longer than they are broad and are therefore called long barrows, while others, from their shape, are called round barrows. Many mounds of both kinds have been opened and examined. The bones of the people buried in the long barrows are so different, especially in the measurements of the skull, from those buried in the round barrows that the two peoples must have been quite different in race. Which, then, was the earlier? The contents of the barrows supply the answer. In the round barrows metal tools and implements are found, but in the long barrows the weapons or implements are of flint or stone, never of metal.

The long barrows, therefore, were made by men of the Stone Age. The round barrows were made at a later time when bronze had, partly at least, taken the place of flint and stone for the fashioning of weapons and tools.

The long barrows of Gloucestershire are fewer in number than the round barrows. Nevertheless they are much more numerous upon the Cotswolds than in most other parts of the country, the number being about forty. Generally, but not always, they are placed upon the summit of a ridge overlooking a wide circuit of the hills or the vale of the Severn below, as though the makers wished their great dead still to keep watch and ward over the lands on which they had lived.

Frequently the Cotswold long barrows are 'horned' in shape, and are thus curiously like the horned stone cairns of Caithness in the north of Scotland.

Perhaps the most famous of the Cotswold long barrows is Uley Bury between Dursley and Nailsworth, which may well serve as a type of the others. The mound is about 120 feet long and about 80 feet broad in the widest part, though the average width is much less. The whole barrow is surrounded by a wall of stones built without mortar. This wall curves inward at one end and the curve leads to an entrance formed by two great upright

stones across the tops of which a third huge stone has been placed. From the entrance a passage runs under the mound. Its walls are formed by large upright stones and it leads to rude stone-built chambers in the heart of the barrow. Within these chambers the bones of some thirty people were found.

In some parts of England the long barrows occasionally contain the ashes of bodies. In Gloucestershire, however, only unburnt bodies are found in them. The position in which they are discovered shows that they were generally buried in a squatting position with the knees drawn up towards the chin.

The bones found in the long barrows evidently belonged to a short race of people, the men seldom exceeding five and a half feet in height. But the most important results arise from the measurements of the skulls. These are always found to be longer in proportion to their breadth than the skulls of races which came later into our land. The shape of the bones of the front part of the skulls of these long-headed people leads us to the conclusion that they were pleasant in face and feature. Probably they had dark eyes and hair.

Upon our hills also we find numerous remains which show us the manner of dwellings in which these ancient people lived. To the careless eye these are merely small hollows in the ground, grass covered like the rest of the hill slopes or summits upon which they occur. Careful examination, however, shows that these pits were the dwelling-places of ancient man.

Within the pit large stones are generally found placed against the sides of the hollow, and at the bottom are sometimes found stones showing the action of fire, charred fragments of wood, and sometimes worked flint flakes or tools. Hence we may conclude that these grass-grown hollows are the remains of ancient dwellings of the Later Stone Age. Probably when the pit-dwellers lived in them they were covered in by tent-shaped huts made of the branches of trees, or of poles covered over with turf or grass. Such shelters would be not at all unlike those used by many savage races at the present day.

The size of the pit-dwellings varies. On Minchinhampton Common they are generally about twelve feet long and three feet wide. On Selsley Hill in the same neighbourhood most of the pits are twice this size.

A writer in 1871 counted four hundred of these pits on Rodborough Hill alone, while he estimated that the making of roads and other works had, within recent times, destroyed some two or three hundred more. There are also a number of pit-dwellings on Stinchcombe Hill and on Westridge Hill near Wotton-under-Edge.

The long barrows and the pit-dwellings enable us to form some fairly clear idea of the long-vanished people, the works of whose hands have survived their makers by many thousands of years. In imagination we can see the open spaces of the hill-tops dotted here and there with clusters of rude huts raised above the shelter trenches of the pits. Among them pass a short, dark-haired and dark-eyed people. At no great distance from their huts, pasture their flocks and herds—oxen and sheep and horses—whose bones we find to-day mingled with those of their owners. Some of the women are cooking food in the open air; others, perhaps, in the smaller pits, some of which seem to have been intended for this purpose. Others are roughly grinding corn, so roughly that much grit and many fragments of stone become mixed with it in the process.

From the village of pit-dwellings issue forth now and then the men of the tribe, clad in skins and armed with bows and flint-tipped arrows, to hunt the deer in the forests surrounding the open clearing of the settlement.

The savage hunter's pursuit of the deer was not without its dangers. In the forest recesses lurked the bear and the wolf, who often issued thence to prey upon the pit-dwellers' flocks and herds. Probably the forests were largely of beech-trees, the 'weeds of the oolite'.

Possibly it was in the time of these pit-dwellers that the large standing stones which we find in various places in our county were raised. We have no such great circle as Stonehenge in Wiltshire. There are, however, the

remains of a stone circle at Marshfield, and in other places a number of single stones evidently erected by the hand of man. On the top of a long barrow near Gatcombe Park stands the 'Tingle Stone', and not far off the 'Long Stone'. Within the camp on Bredon Hill stands the Bambury Stone, which may, however, be a natural formation. At Woeful Dane's Bottom, near Minchinhampton, there is a large standing stone perforated with holes. Near the village of Lower Swell are the 'Hoar Stone' and the 'Whittle Stone'.

The time of peace, if it ever existed in the Stone Age, was not to endure. Scattered all over the Cotswolds are evidences of the coming of a taller, stronger, and fiercer people, who had, moreover, the vast advantage of knowing how to fashion weapons of metal. Many of the men of the Stone Age were no doubt killed with all the horrors of savage warfare; others probably were driven into the forests and wild hills of the west; some it would seem were spared, perhaps as slaves, for their bones are occasionally found mingled with those of their conquerors.

CHAPTER IV

THE MEN OF THE ROUND BARROWS

The new-comers were, like the men of the Stone Age, barrow-builders. But their burial mounds are different in shape. They are roughly circular and are quite numerous upon the Cotswolds. They far outnumber the long barrows and frequently occur in clusters.

The shape, structure, and contents of the round barrows show that they were raised by a race quite different from the builders of the long barrows. In the first place, the round barrow was generally less carefully constructed. Sometimes the body was burnt and the ashes placed in a

rude urn or laid upon the ground. In other cases the body was not burnt, but placed in a squatting posture just as were the bodies in the long barrows. The remains, whether burnt or not, were generally enclosed in a rude kind of box made of large stones, and above this the earth was piled in a great heap.

But though the round barrows were much simpler than the chambered long barrows of the Later Stone Age, their builders had evidently advanced a good deal in civilization. For among the contents of the round barrows tools and weapons of bronze are frequently found. The knowledge of the use of metals to make bronze implements marks a great advance ; a new stage in progress. It is therefore distinguished as the Bronze Age. Stone implements were not entirely abandoned in favour of bronze, for flint weapons are also found in the round barrows. Probably for a long time weapons of bronze were articles of great value.

The round-barrow men were also able to make pottery, which, though rough, was often decorated with a good deal of skill. The decorative patterns were generally formed of straight lines, scratched with a sharp point upon the clay before it was baked. Some of the implements found show that they had also learnt how to make a coarse cloth. They decorated themselves, too, with beads and ornaments made of various substances.

The bones in the round barrows indicate a race much taller than the people of the Later Stone Age. Tall men among the new-comers were six feet or more in height. The bones, too, are those of not only a taller but also a stronger and more powerfully built race. But the measurements of the skulls afford the most conclusive evidence of the difference between the new race and the old. Whereas the builders of the long barrows were a people with long-shaped heads, the makers of the round barrows were a round-headed race with skulls much broader in proportion than those of the earlier people.

These round-headed men were also a fiercer and more formidable-looking people than the long-heads whom

they conquered. They had broad receding foreheads, beetling eyebrows, large and prominent cheek-bones, strong and massive jaws, and were probably comparatively fair in complexion. It is not to be wondered at that these fierce, big-boned, round-headed men, armed with weapons of bronze, were able to impose their will upon the smaller and gentler race, whose only weapons were of stone. They ruled as conquerors and leaders among the earlier people.

The new-comers probably invaded our country from the lands across the English Channel. They are usually spoken of as Celts, a word which is, however, somewhat loosely used for several peoples who were of different races. They probably came to our country in a succession of inroads. At least two great swarms of invaders, the Goidels and the Brythons, swept successively over the land.

The descendants of the invaders and of the remnants of the long-headed race, with whom they probably intermarried, made up the people whom we know as the Ancient Britons. The name includes a number of tribes who never formed one united kingdom. Warfare between different tribes, or between alliances of tribes, went on during the centuries before our land came to be known by civilized peoples. Nearly every prominent point along the steep western face of the Cotswolds bears testimony to these conflicts.

CHAPTER V

THE COTSWOLD CAMPS

A MAN cannot walk far along the westward ridge of the Cotswolds without coming upon the remains of earthworks. Indeed in a long day's walk he may well visit several. For instance, on the top of Leckhampton Hill, near Cheltenham, there is an ancient rampart defending a portion

of the hill which is fronted by a steep rock-face. Some two miles further along the Birdlip Road there is an earthwork sweeping round in a curve to enclose the steep face of Crickley Hill. Beyond this are similar ramparts on Birdlip Hill and Cooper's Hill, while at Painswick the whole summit of the hill is defended by earthworks, except on one side where the natural steepness of the hill makes such defences unnecessary.

Near Painswick there are, in addition, Amberley, Minchinhampton, Uley Bury, and Selsley Hill Camps. Again, near Winchcombe are the camps at Charlton Abbots, Nottingham Hill, and Cleeve Hill. Much the same is true along the whole line of the hills.

Who built these ancient camps and against what enemies were they raised to defend the dwellers on the Cotswolds ? If the question be asked of the country folk the answer will probably be that they are Roman camps. But a Roman camp was built in a regular square or oblong shape, and this rectangular form was adopted whatever the natural formation of the ground might be.

Now the Gloucestershire camps are quite different in mode of construction. Of the twenty-five camps marked on the Ordnance Map of the county, only one or two are in shape like the camps usually made by the Romans. The earthworks generally follow the natural formation of the ground and trace out an irregular figure or the arc of a large circle.

Hence the Cotswold camps are, in most cases, probably earlier than the time of the Romans in Britain. Indeed, some of them may well be much earlier. For example, Uley Bury Camp is remarkable for the great number of arrow-heads which have been found within it. It is therefore better to speak of them as British camps, as they were originally made at some unknown time before the Romans came to Britain. Their position on the summits of the western slope of the hills overlooking the vale points to their having been places of shelter and defence against some enemy advancing along the cross-wise valleys, down which flow the waters tributary to the Severn, to attack the dwellers upon the Cotswold tableland. Possibly

the Severn formed the frontier between hostile tribes, while the marshes and forests of its valley were a debatable land between them.

Standing within one of these ancient camps, the camp on Crickley Hill for example, one can readily imagine the scene which presented itself to the dweller upon the hills when these grass-grown ramparts were still a vital fact in existence upon the Cotswolds.

The features of the landscape as they appeared to the ancient watcher who looked out from the camp were much the same as to us. Immediately in front of him fell away the precipitous face of the rocks, succeeded lower down by the less sudden but still steep slopes of the hill. But where we look down upon the neatly parcelled fields, the sheltered villages, and the tower of Gloucester rising above the smoke-haze of the city, he saw only the dense forests which clothed the valley. Probably, too, the hills behind him were heavily timbered with beeches, a tree which still flourishes on the Cotswolds in such woods as Buckholt, and in the long lines of trees screening the roads which, seen against the skyline, are characteristic features of the landscapes of the district. For him there was little evidence of man's handiwork in the scene.

Away in the distance he would, however, see the smoke rising from the outpost of Caer Glou—the Gloucester of the future—whence first would come the news of a foray of the enemy, warning the hillmen to take shelter within their ramparts.

Sometimes probably the camps were places of shelter for the women and children of the tribe, garrisoned by a few of the men, while the others went on warlike expeditions in their turn to attack the settlements of their foes.

The camps generally occupy strong natural positions at points of the ridge higher than others in their immediate neighbourhood. Sometimes, however, as in the case of Cleeve Hill Camp, there is higher land close by.

The earthworks are frequently in the form of a single or double line, sweeping round in a bold curve, the ends of which rest upon steep, abrupt cliffs which defend the

front of the camp. Such are the camps on Cleeve Hill, Leckhampton, Crickley, Minchinhampton, and Amberley.

Sometimes a projecting spur of a hill is cut off by an earthwork, as at Nottingham Hill and Broadbarrow Green. In other camps, as at Uley Bury, the whole summit of the hill is defended. Charlton Abbots Camp is one of the few circular camps in Gloucestershire.

The area enclosed is generally small, sometimes less than ten acres, so that the defences could be scarcely more than temporary shelters against sudden attacks. The camp on Stinchcombe Hill, near Dursley, for example, is so small that it could not have sheltered any considerable number of people. Perhaps some of these smaller camps were merely fortified signalling stations. On the other hand, however, the camp on Minchinhampton Common encloses an area of something like 800 acres—so that its defences probably enclosed a whole tribal settlement.

Though the Cotswold Camps are, in most cases at least, British rather than Roman, many of them yield evidences of the presence of the latter people. The fact that Roman coins have been found in a number of them points to the probability of their having been used by the Romans during their conquest or occupation of our land. One or two, moreover, bear evident signs in their rectangular form of being Roman in origin or of having been altered by the Romans to suit their own principles of fortification.

Sodbury Camp, about two miles to the east of Chipping Sodbury, is generally recognized as being the most perfect Roman camp in Gloucestershire. It is almost rectangular in shape, but outside the Roman works are the remains of a larger British earthwork. Haresfield Camp again was originally an irregular British work. From it the Romans cut off a portion by building another rampart. The camp at Bourton-on-the-Water, known as Salmonsbury, is rectangular in shape, and, moreover, a number of Roman relics have been found there.

These Roman camps, built or altered by the great conquering nation of the ancient world, bring us to the beginning of the written history of our land.

CHAPTER VI

THE COMING OF THE ROMANS

Before the Romans conquered our country the people of the southern parts of Britain had advanced many stages beyond the civilization of the Stone Age, or even of the Early Bronze Age. Many centuries—twelve or fifteen perhaps—had passed since the coming of the round-headed men.

Meanwhile the Ancient Britons, the descendants of the early dwellers in our land had, in the southern parts of the country, been brought into contact with traders from Phoenicia and from the Greek colonies on the Mediterranean. Intercourse also sprang up with the kindred people of Gaul.

It was after his conquest of the latter region that Julius Caesar first brought the Roman legions into Britain. But his expeditions in 55 and 54 B.C. were in no sense a conquest of the country. He traversed only a small part of the land and defeated only a small section of her peoples. It was not until the greater part of a century had passed since Caesar's invasions that the conquest was begun in earnest. By that time the Britons in some parts of the island could weave cloth, fashion pottery upon the wheel, and skilfully construct weapons and chariots of war. Moreover, some at least used and coined money in bronze, silver, and gold.

The degree of civilization, however, varied greatly. While the people of Southern Britain had learnt a great deal from their intercourse with Europe, civilization faded away gradually until a condition of barbarism prevailed in the more remote and wilder parts of the island.

Moreover, the Ancient Britons were not a united people, but a number of tribes often hostile and, in many cases, probably differing considerably in race and language. One great bond of union among them existed, however, in their common religion, Druidism, and the priests or Druids

wielded great authority. To this day various Druidical observances are believed to be traceable in the times of meeting and other customs of the ancient Court of Verderers of the Forest of Dean.

At the time of the coming of the Romans, the Cotswold region of Gloucestershire was occupied by a British race variously known as the Dobuni or Boduni. Across the Severn, in the Forest of Dean and among the hills of South Wales, dwelt a fierce and intractable race known as the Silures.

The actual conquest of Britain was begun in A.D. 43 by the Emperor Claudius, who dispatched one of his generals, Aulus Plautius, for the purpose. The emperor himself also made a brief campaign in Britain, and without much difficulty established himself at Colchester. Thence the legions spread westward with the object of establishing themselves in a strong position in the west, and then subduing the country lying to the south of a line joining the stations. Once subdued, the southern part of the country would serve as a base of supplies for operations to extend the conquered area further and further to the northwards.

The place selected for their western station was the site of the present city of Gloucester, the position of which for many centuries gave it great military importance, since the city stands at the lowest point on the Severn at which the river can be readily bridged. Gloucester, moreover, lies in about the same latitude as Colchester. Its position on the River Severn also gave the Romans a good western frontier to their earlier conquests, and the valley of the river a favourable road for carrying their conquests further northward.

In their advance into our part of Britain, the Romans established themselves on the site of the town of Cirencester. This settlement was the beginning of the military station of Corinium which was destined under Roman rule to become a wealthy and beautiful town. The people of the hills, the Boduni, appear to have offered but little resistance to the Roman legions, but, when the soldiers of the Emperor passed into the valley to establish themselves

at Glevum on the site of our city of Gloucester, they came into conflict with the fierce and warlike Silures.

The Roman historian tells us that the natural courage and ferocity of this tribe was increased by the confidence which they felt in the presence of the great hero of the British resistance. This chief was Caradoc, called by the Romans Caractacus. During the years of conflict with the Silures the line of camps along the western edge of the Cotswolds were no doubt of great importance to the Romans in their defence of the eastern parts of the county.

After many experiences of good and evil fortunes Caractacus assembled a great army of his wild soldiers. He took up his position in a place backed by rugged hills, while, in front of the plain which stretched away from the foot of the hills, ran a river. It is impossible to identify this position with certainty. Some, however, believe the hills to be the Malverns and the river the Severn, which runs almost parallel to them at a distance of a few miles.

Whatever the actual site of the battle may have been, the issue of the fight was disastrous to the British. Multitudes of the Silures fell fighting with unavailing ferocity. Caractacus himself, his followers broken or slain, and his wife and daughter captives, escaped from the field of battle. He was, however, basely betrayed by the queen of a tribe with whom he sought shelter, and carried captive to Rome. But the spirit of the chieftain rose above defeat. He defended himself and his warfare against Rome so boldly before the Roman Emperor that he was set free.

This great defeat probably broke the power of the Silures. True, they appear to have kept up the struggle for years later, but gradually the weight of the Roman power bore down their resistance. Glevum, the Roman Gloucester, became a great place of arms. It was defended by a wall forming a rectangle, within which the main thoroughfares met centrally at right angles, just as Northgate, Southgate, Eastgate, and Westgate Streets do in the city of Gloucester to-day.

Gradually the Romans pressed westwards from their station at Glevum. Crossing the Severn, they conquered the Forest of Dean and established a fort at Caerwent at the mouth of the Wye. Thence they carried their conquests further into Wales. Meanwhile, their legions had also been pressing northwards, and about forty years after the beginning of the Conquest the whole of South Britain was in their power.

CHAPTER VII

UNDER THE ROMANS

Britain remained a part of the Roman Empire for about three and a half centuries. During that time the land was ruled according to Roman laws, and Roman customs and amusements were introduced. There was, however, no Roman colonization of the land. Only a number of the officials of the Government and the soldiers, who kept order in the land, were Romans. Indeed in most cases these officials and soldiers were probably only Roman in the sense that they were subjects of the great Empire which had spread far and wide from the Imperial City.

The people of Britain, though conquered by the Romans, remained entirely or almost entirely British in race. Moreover, they retained their own language, though many doubtless spoke the Latin tongue as well. But in most parts of the country the effects of the Roman civilization were deeply felt and the land, as a part of the Roman Empire, shared in the highest culture of the time.

Gloucestershire bears to this day numerous evidences of the Roman occupation. The Romans were not only great soldiers and rulers, they were also great engineers, builders of roads and bridges and aqueducts. In the first place, the great roads were built for military purposes.

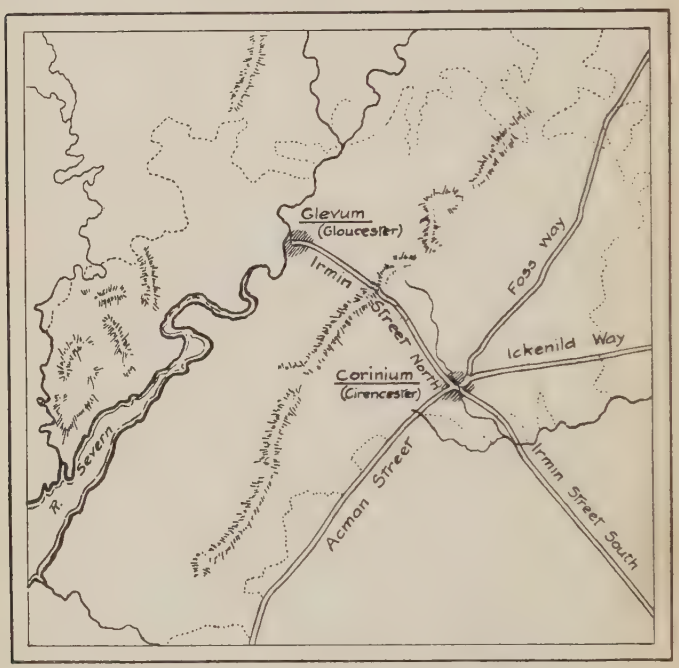
The Roman generals realized to the full the advantage of being able to move their soldiers rapidly from one point to another. Hence they drove their roads across the length and breadth of the land. The roads generally ran in almost straight lines across the country, passing over marshes upon raised causeways and crossing rivers by bridges or paved fords. They were very solidly made and the surface was generally paved with stones. Such a highway was called in Latin, *via strata*, that is, a paved way. Hence the English in later times called them 'streets', and frequently, too, used the name 'street' or other forms of the Latin *strata*, such as strat- or stret-, for the names of places on the old Roman roads.

A map of Gloucestershire shows that quite a number of these old Roman highways meet at, or near, the town of Cirencester, a fact which is evidence of the importance of Corinium during Roman times. One of these highways, known as Acman Street, begins at Exeter, passes through Bath and thence runs to Cirencester. The Foss Way, which runs from Cirencester right through the heart of the Midlands to Lincoln, is one of the finest examples of a Roman highway. It passes across the eastern portion of Gloucestershire through the towns of Northleach, Stow-on-the-Wold, and Moreton-in-the-Marsh. Where the Foss Way has not been encroached upon it has a width of not less than twenty yards. The road, through a great part of its course, is raised well above the level of the fields which border it, and on each side of it is a ditch or foss (L. *fossa*) from which the highway gets its name.

About a mile outside Cirencester the Foss Way is joined by the Icknield Way, which enters Gloucestershire from Oxfordshire, near Eastleach.

That portion of the Irmin Street which runs from Cirencester to Gloucester is no doubt the oldest Roman highway in the county, since it connects the two great Roman stations in this district. At the present time the road climbs the steep face of the Cotswolds at a point a short distance away from the ancient ascent. Though the Roman engineers were generally less careful to avoid steep gradients than later road-builders, the old road was

much less steep than the present one. The modern highway climbs the hill by an almost straight road, which is one of the steepest of the important roads in the Cotswolds. The Roman road, on the other hand, reached the summit gradually by a series of zigzags, the outline of which can



Roman Roads in Gloucestershire

still be traced. Across the Cotswold uplands, however, the Irmin Street still runs in its ancient course.

As the tide of Roman conquest spread through the Forest of Dean, the Irmin Street was extended beyond Gloucester, first to Caerwent, and later, to Caerleon at the mouth of the Usk. The section of the Irmin Street from Cirencester to Caerleon is sometimes called Irmin Street North, to distinguish it from the other section of

the highway, Irmin Street South, which connected Cirencester by way of Cricklade and Silchester with London.

These great Roman ways radiating from the Roman town of Corinium were the main high roads of the conquerors in our county. But there were, in addition, many other roads of less importance, some of which can still be made out with greater or less distinctness. Such are the White Way which leaves Irmin Street near Cirencester and passes through Chedworth and Withington, and the Portway connecting Gloucester with Bath, possibly along the line of a still more ancient track.

Though the Roman roads were originally built for military purposes, yet, as the land settled down to peace under its conquerors, they became important agencies in developing the resources of the country and advancing its civilization. Along these splendid highways swept the mounted couriers of the imperial governors and officers, the rapidity of their movements aided by the relays of horses which were kept in readiness at intervals along the road. Now and again, too, the roads resounded to the steady tramp of the Roman legions marching to change station, or sometimes, when the period of profound peace which Roman Britain long enjoyed had closed, to repel the attacks of the barbarians upon the borders of the province or of the sea-rovers upon the coast. But the roads were crowded, not only with the pomp of armed forces, but also with the busy traffic of commerce. Droves of oxen and flocks of sheep, wagons laden with the corn of the lowlands, the wool of the uplands, or the iron which the Romans taught the Britons to smelt in the Forest of Dean, passed along them in endless succession. Here and there, by the side of the great roads or connected with them by by-roads, stood fair villas or comfortable farmhouses wherein Romans or Romanized Britons lived in a degree of comfort scarcely exceeded in our own days.

CHAPTER VIII

ROMAN REMAINS IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE

As Cirencester and Gloucester stand upon the sites of the great Roman stations of Corinium and Glevum, remains of Roman times are, as we should expect, frequently found in and around these towns.

Both Corinium and Glevum were walled towns. A part of the Roman wall at Cirencester still stands and is known as the 'City Bank'. Originally it was built of loose stones and rubble backed with earth and then faced with dressed stones. Some of the lower parts of the Roman wall of Gloucester have also been discovered.

Corinium was a larger and more important place than Glevum. It had a strong garrison of Roman cavalry, and was also a thriving commercial town. The centre of its business was a great building called the Basilica; a law court, a market, and a place of meeting for commercial men. The Basilica was a usual feature of the Roman towns of the time of the Empire. At one end there was frequently a semicircular building or apse in which courts of justice were held. Probably it was in imitation of these that similar semicircular buildings were added to the eastern ends of many Norman churches in later days. The great Basilica of Corinium perished in the ruin of Roman Britain, but its buried foundations still exist and their extent shows that it must have been a building of great size, as large, indeed, as an abbey or cathedral of later days.

Great numbers of the bases, shafts, and capitals of pillars have from time to time been unearthed at Cirencester, the remains probably of the Capitol or other public buildings of the Roman town. An old writer tells us that he saw them, in the year 1724, being carted away in wagons to be used for mending the roads.

Temples, too, there were, temples of the heathen gods whom the Romans worshipped at the time of the conquest and, later on, temples for the worship of Christ, when

the Romans had become Christians. A sign of the change of faith is to be seen in the remains, frequently found in our county, which show us how they disposed of their dead. The Romans, who worshipped Jupiter and the numerous gods of their old religion, burnt or cremated the bodies of the dead and enclosed the ashes in urns, many of which have been found in Gloucestershire. But after the Romans had become Christians this custom became repugnant to them, and the dead were buried in stone or leaden coffins. A number of such coffins have been found, and examples may be seen in such museums as the Corinium Museum at Cirencester. A number of altars found at Kingsholm, Gloucester, also take us back to the worship of the gods of early Rome—Jupiter, Mars, Apollo, and the rest. On the other hand, the discovery of a stone at the Roman villa of Chedworth, inscribed in Greek letters with the monogram of Christ, shows us that a Christian dwelt there.

Among the most interesting memorials of the Romans are the monumental stones erected to their dead. Several of these have been found in Cirencester. There is, for example, a stone carved with a group representing a horse-soldier thrusting his spear through a prostrate foe. It is inscribed to the memory of a Sextus Valerius Genialis, a horseman of the Thracian 'wing', i. e. cavalry regiment. He died, we are told, at the age of forty, after twenty years' service in the Imperial army. He was a native of Frisia, and was therefore, no doubt, akin in race to the men of the Old English tribes who in later years were to take the place of the Romans as rulers in Britain. Another memorial stone found at Cirencester was to the memory of one Dannicus, 'a horseman of the Indian "wing",' while others were to the memory of Thracian soldiers who came from the far-off Balkan peninsula. Some stones to the memory of civilians have also been found. In the neighbouring county of Somerset, at the city of Bath, is a tablet to the memory of an official —a 'decurion'—of Glevum.

The chief place of amusement of the inhabitants of Corinium still exists. This, as in other Roman towns,

was the amphitheatre in which took place the chariot races, the wild beast fights, and the gladiatorial combats which were the chief sports of Roman times. The amphitheatre is now called the Bull Ring, no doubt because in later times it was used for the sport of bull-baiting. The amphitheatre at Cirencester is well marked, although, of course, time has smoothed down the tiers of seats which once rose around the central arena. It

THE BULL RING, CIRENCESTER

measures nearly one hundred and fifty feet in length and somewhat less in breadth.

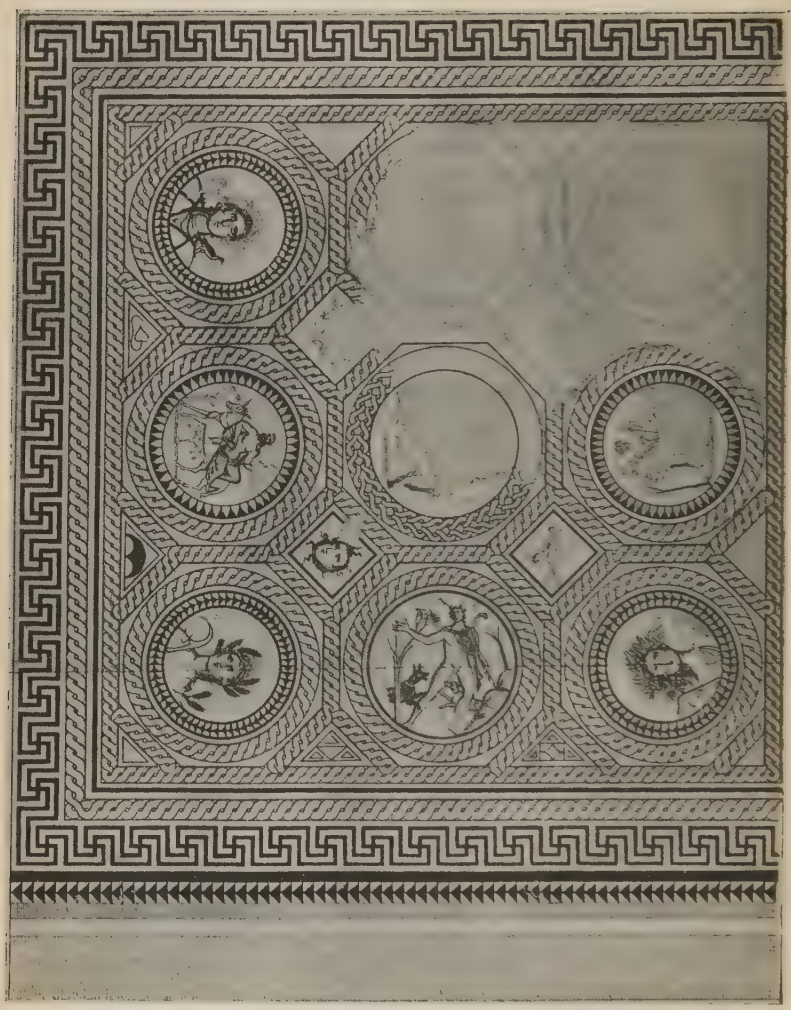
In the Forest of Dean there are remains of ancient workings which reveal the Romans to us as miners and smelters of iron. These are ancient iron-workings which are known locally as 'Scowles'. Within them a number of Roman remains, tools of various kinds, coins, and other articles have been found from time to time.

A vast number of articles in daily use among the Romans and Romanized Britons of the time of the conquest have been discovered in our county. Thousands

of coins have been found. Those unearthed in or near Cirencester range, as regards date, from the Emperor Augustus, who was ruling in Rome before the conquest began, to the Emperor Honorius, who occupied the throne when the legions were withdrawn. Pottery, whole or more often in fragments, is also frequently found. Even to this day, the farmer, on some parts of the Cotswolds, ploughing his fields or digging his garden, occasionally turns up fragments of Roman ware. Sometimes this is a beautiful red or black ware, finely glazed and most skilfully decorated, known as Samian ware. This was probably made abroad. More frequently, however, the ware is of a commoner kind, and, though often an imitation of the true Samian, is much inferior in quality and in beauty of decoration. Many articles of metal, especially of bronze, have also been found—lamps, bowls, dishes, brooches, pins, and scores of other articles.

But perhaps the remains of the dwelling-places of Roman Britain, which are quite numerous in our county, are still more interesting. The Cotswolds, whose breezy open uplands were undisturbed through centuries save by the flocks of sheep which pastured upon them, preserve to us, as we have seen, many memorials of the men of the Later Stone and Bronze Ages. Their untilled pastures have also hidden for many centuries the remains of Roman dwellings. True, the buildings were in part destroyed when barbarism again swept over the land, but their foundations were gradually covered by the earth and thus preserved until accident or research uncovered them in times when men were alive to the interest of the story of the past.

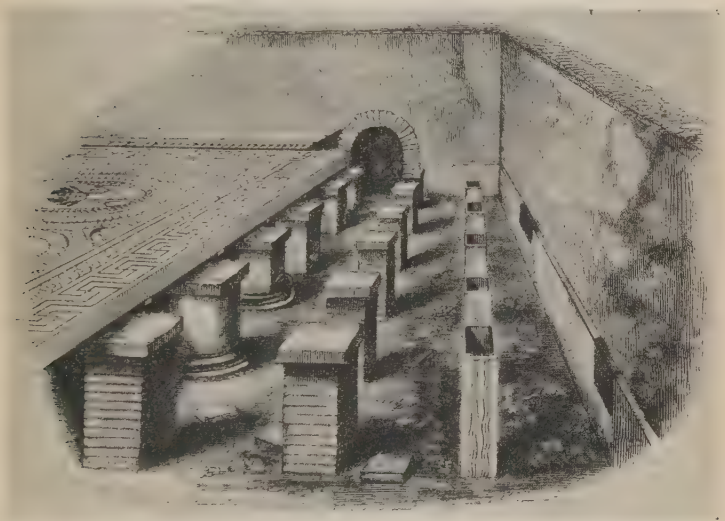
Evidently our county was well settled during Roman times, for, besides the remains of dwellings at Gloucester and Cirencester, more or less complete foundations of twenty-four Roman villas have been found in it. An interesting feature of these buildings is the arrangement of the floors upon short supporting pillars of stone or Roman brick and with channels communicating with a kind of oven. These arrangements show us that the houses



Roman Pavement found in Dyer Street, Cirencester

were warmed in winter by currents of hot air which passed under the floors.

The floors found are, even in their incomplete state, often very beautiful. They are covered with pavements made up of small cubes of stone, or other hard material, of different colours. By setting these small cubes in order in a hard cement, the Roman artists worked out



Supports to Heating Arrangements, Dyer Street Pavement

many beautiful designs. The basis of the design is generally a geometrical pattern with an ornamental border. Within the spaces of the design, however, figures of gods and goddesses, of men and women, and of animals are introduced. The whole effect is very beautiful in design and colour.

Some of the finest of the tesselated pavements of Roman Britain have been found in Gloucestershire. In the splendid Roman villa discovered at Woodchester there was a great apartment nearly fifty feet square. Its floor

was covered by the most elaborate tesselated pavement ever found in England. Its design consists of a series of circles. In the innermost circle is represented Orpheus, while around him are seen marching the wild beasts subdued by the magic of his music. Other pavements of great beauty have been discovered in Cirencester. Perhaps the finest was found some sixty years ago in Dyer Street. Upon it are represented Actaeon the Hunter, Ceres the goddess of the farms, Flora the goddess of flowers, Pomona the goddess of the orchards, and the woodland deity Silenus—divinities not inappropriate even at the present day for the decoration of a Cotswold house.

There is a considerable similarity of design in all the Gloucestershire tesselated pavements, so that it appears probable that they were made by the same school of artists. The different colours were obtained from various sources; Cotswold stones give white, cream, and yellow cubes, and, when altered by burning, a shade of grey; the lias provided slate-coloured, and the old red sandstone chocolate-coloured stones. Baked clays or terra-cotta were employed for various shades of red and black, while little cubes of ruby-red glass were also used with great effect.

The villas at Woodchester and in Dyer Street, Cirencester, were evidently the abodes of wealthy Romans. Both were built in places which, as their names denote, were Roman stations of importance, -chester and -cester being English forms of the Roman *castra*, a camp. Here and there, however, in Gloucestershire are the remains of country dwellings remote from the great Roman towns and stations. Such villas, for instance, have been found at Spoonley near Winchcombe, at Witcombe, at Rodmorton, at Dry Hill Farm on the slopes of Crickley Hill, and at Chedworth, among other places.

The villa in the beautiful Chedworth woods, on the estate of Lord Eldon, was accidentally discovered by some sportsmen when ferreting. The remains of the building have been carefully uncovered, and furnish a fine example of a Roman country house in Britain. The numerous relics of Roman times found around the villa are now carefully preserved in a museum. Though less grand

than the villas at Woodchester and Cirencester, it must have been a house of some importance, as the tesselated pavements in some of the rooms show. The villa on the slopes of Crickley Hill furnished an example of a humbler kind of dwelling of Roman times. Probably it was a farm-house of the period, perhaps of some British farmer who had learnt the lessons of Roman civilization, or of some veteran soldier who had settled down to till the sunny hill-slopes after serving his time in the legions of the emperor at the military post of Glevum in the valley below.

CHAPTER IX

THE COMING OF THE OLD ENGLISH PEOPLES

The remains of Roman times in our county plainly reveal to us a time of ordered government and of great progress in the arts of peace. Rome prevented the old rivalries of the British tribes from bursting out into hostility. Within the borders of her empire she imposed peace upon the subject peoples and bound them together in a common obedience.

For a long period Roman Britain enjoyed peace, but soon after the end of the third century the legions were called upon to resist attacks. Fierce and formidable foes began to make frequent inroads upon the borders of the province, and the great wall which stretched from Tyne to Solway Firth, its garrison of soldiers and its catapults and other engines of war no longer sufficed to keep back the savage Picts.

Even more difficult to cope with than the land attacks of the northern barbarians were the inroads of the sea-rovers. These, some time before the end of the fourth century, though we do not exactly know when, began to make incursions upon the eastern and southern coasts. Crossing the North Sea the rovers, if they contrived to

elude the vigilance of the Roman fleets, ran their boats into some inlet or creek along the coast. Leaving them under a guard, the plunderers swept over the country-side, whose villas and temples were full of tempting spoil, and left ruin and desolation in their wake. These sea-rovers were our Old English forefathers. They came from the peninsula of Jutland and the districts around the mouth of the Elbe, and were of the kindred tribes of the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes. So long, however, as the power of Rome remained strong the sea-rovers could only make plundering incursions. Soon after landing they had to retreat before the disciplined troops of Rome advancing against them along the great military roads. But gradually the strength of Rome grew unequal to the burden of her empire. The attacks upon the borders and sea-coast of the British province were only a small part of the difficulties which taxed her resources to the utmost. All along the long line of her frontiers in Europe she was engaged in fierce conflict with wild barbarian hordes. So great was the strain upon her resources that it became at length impossible to hold and to defend so distant a part of the empire as Britain. The Roman legions were therefore withdrawn early in the fifth century to aid in the defence of the parts of the empire nearer the seat of government. Thus the Romanized Britons, who for centuries had depended entirely upon the protection of the Roman legions, were left to defend themselves against their barbarian foes as best they might.

A time of horror followed the withdrawal of the legions. On all sides the British were the prey of the spoilers.

Of the barbarian hordes who invaded the land the most formidable were the Old English sea-rovers who now began to come to Britain not merely as plunderers but as colonists. The Jutes are said to have established a kingdom in Kent about the middle of the fifth century, while, later, the Saxons established themselves south of the Thames and in Essex, and Angles on the north-eastern and eastern coasts.

Our knowledge of the actual events of the conquest is scanty and doubtful. One thing is, however, certain, namely, that the conquest occupied a very long period

of time, some two centuries in fact. Moreover, the 'Anglo-Saxon' conquest never completely included the whole limits of the old Roman province.

The length of time occupied by the conquest renders it probable that the invaders came in comparatively small bands, each of which conquered only so much land as they could themselves occupy. Moreover, the long period which elapsed before the conquest was complete, points to a stubborn resistance, of which, indeed, there is evidence. In long years of fighting against their heathen foes the British recovered much of the skill and hardihood in battle which their forefathers had displayed.

Nowhere was the resistance of the British to the progress of the Saxons more stubborn than in the west. Indeed, out of this resistance grew the tradition of King Arthur and the knights of his Round Table, a beautiful set of stories which has added glory to our literature. So far as our county is concerned the decisive struggle for mastery did not take place (according to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle) until the year 577, more than eighty years later than the date given for the establishment of the West Saxons upon the coast of Hampshire and the foundation of their kingdom of Wessex.

Very slowly the West Saxons had extended their limits northward and westward. We are told that, in 577, two of their leaders crossed the Avon and marched to the southern slopes of the Cotswolds. At Dyrham, ten miles north of Bath and within the borders of the present county of Gloucester, the West Saxons were met by the forces of the British under three 'kings', who ruled in the ancient Roman towns of Gloucester, Cirencester, and Bath. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle tells us nothing of the details except that the three British kings were slain and their cities of 'Gleawanceaster, Cirenceaster, and Bathanceaster' were taken. Apparently, therefore, the slaughter of the British was great, and the result of the battle decisive. It gave the West Saxons the command of the Severn and of its crossing at Gloucester, while the possession of Cirencester laid open to them the whole of the Cotswold country.

The battle of Dyrham, therefore, marks the conquest of our part of the country by the Saxons and the beginning of its story as a part of England. Moreover, it was one of the most important of the battles in the whole of the conquest. For more than a century and a half from the time of the withdrawal of the Roman legions, the Britons, though gradually losing possession of the eastern part of the island, had kept an undivided control over the west. But the conquest of the lower valley of the Severn by the West Saxons thrust a wedge into the lands still held by the Britons. The people of the Cambrian peninsula, whom the West Saxons called Welsh, were cut off from their kinsfolk who dwelt in the south-west of Britain, the counties of Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall, as they were later called. From that time united resistance of the Britons to the English was impossible. Moreover, the English had obtained a natural frontier, the broad waters of the lower Severn, for their conquests. Beyond this natural frontier they did not, for many years, extend their rule. Though, by the battle of Dyrham the Cotswold tableland and the eastern part of the Severn valley passed into the possession of the West Saxons, the Forest of Dean remained in the hands of the Britons. Indeed, it was not until nearly two hundred years later that the Britons or Welsh were driven out of that part of our county and the Wye fixed as the boundary of the lands held by the English.

CHAPTER X

SAXON AND CELT

After the battle of Dyrham a branch of the Old English people called the Hwiccas took possession of the Cotswold tableland and of the part of the vale of the Severn lying eastward of the river. Thus a great part of the district now known as Gloucestershire passed

under the rule of the invaders. The question as to the fate of the Britons whose lands were taken from them by the conquerors naturally arises.

Some historians, founding their conclusions mainly on the fact that very few British words other than place-names are to be found in our language, conclude that the British were almost, if not quite, exterminated in the districts settled by the Old English peoples. Other writers, who form their conclusions upon measurements of the skull and other parts of the body, and upon such characteristics of race as complexion and the colour of the hair, believe that the English of the present time show evidences of a strong admixture of Celtic blood. They point out also that in Saxon tombs some bodies markedly Celtic in character are found. They believe that not only is it true that 'Saxon and Norman and Dane are we', as Tennyson sings, but that in our veins also runs the blood derived from the ancient British, from men of the Bronze and Later Stone Ages, perhaps even from the Cave-men and the men of the River Drift.

Whatever the truth may be, it seems probable that while in the first fury of the conquest the Ancient Britons were slain or driven out from the south-eastern parts of the country, a considerable number were spared, perhaps as slaves or as the wives of the conquerors in the western districts. In support of this view is the fact that, while British names of places are few in the parts first conquered by the Old English tribes, they are more numerous in the western regions of England. Perhaps also the enslavement of the British explains to some extent the large number of slaves, much larger than in most parts of England, which the 'Domesday Book' shows to have existed in Gloucestershire at the time of the Norman Conquest.

Though the evidence of place-names is very untrustworthy as regards the question of the survival of a race, it is interesting to notice that a considerable number of places in our county bear names of British origin. Thus the name of the county town, and hence of the county itself, retains through all these centuries the mark of

its foundation by the Britons. Before the Romans established their camp at Gloucester the British had built there a town called Cair Gloui, or Cair-Glou, meaning the ' fair ' town. ' Cair ' or ' Caer ' was simply a general name for town, and the distinctive Glou survived in the Latin form Glevum, in the Old English Gleawancester, and still lives in our name Gloucester.

The two greatest natural features of the county also bear British, or partly British, names. The Severn is called in Welsh Hafren. Possibly, a great scholar says, the British or Old Welsh called it Safren, whence came its Roman name Sabrina and also its English name. The name of the Cotswold Hills is generally considered to be partly British, partly English in origin. The English, finding each of the wooded slopes and valleys of the hills called *coed*, a wood, by the British, adopted the general name, which they did not fully understand, as a particular name. In order to explain it they added their own name for a wood, weald. From the combination of the British word, coed, and the English, weald, both of which have the same meaning, we probably get the various forms Coteswold, Cotteswold, and Cotswold, of the name by which the hills are known.

Another example of an English name added to explain a British common noun, mistaken by the Old English for a proper noun, is to be found in the name Rhydleford. Here Rhyd itself means a ford, as Rhydd does in many places in Wales at present.

The hilly districts of Gloucestershire give us numerous examples of another British or Celtic word. Winchcombe, Stinchcombe, Bushcombe, and many other places retain in their termination ' combe ', the British name for a valley or depression in the hills.

But it is especially in the names of the rivers and of places along the river banks that British names survive. Not only are the words Severn and Thames probably British in origin but so also are Coln and Leach. Avon, too, is a purely British word. There are three Avons in Gloucestershire ; the Stratford Avon which joins the Severn at Tewkesbury, an Avon near Berkeley, and the

Bristol Avon. Frome is another British river-name. It survives in the name of a tributary of the Bristol Avon and in the names Frocester and Frampton-on-Severn.

Fringing the lower tidal waters of the Severn on both banks are a succession of 'pills'—Step Pill, Chessel Pill, Aust Pill, Bulls Pill are examples. The name occurs fully twenty or thirty times on Severn side in the county, and there is also a 'pill' on the Coln at Bibury. The word is the same as 'pwll', found in a number of Welsh names, and means a pool or inlet. 'A pille or creeke,' writes the old author, Leland.

Perhaps, also, such names as Brockworth and Brockhampton are also partly British. 'Brock' is a name of Celtic origin for the badger, an animal still common enough on the Gloucestershire hills.

But though a considerable number of the great natural features and places of Gloucestershire bear names wholly or partly of British origin, they are far outnumbered by the English place-names. A glance at the map of the county cannot fail to fall upon many names ending in 'ton', some 'hams' and 'hamptons', a smaller number of 'leys', 'worths', 'fields', and 'burys', all English place-names. Hence it would appear that most of our Glouecestershire towns and villages are of English settlement.

The settlement of the Old English in our county seems, however, to have been sparser than in the eastern part of England, for Gloucestershire has comparatively few villages in which the buildings are closely grouped around a village green as is common in the Eastern counties. It is, indeed, a county of scattered hamlets rather than of compact villages.

Apart, therefore, from the doubtful evidence of place-names, it appears probable that a considerable proportion of the older British blood mingled with that of the conquerors in the west of England. Whatever the proportion may have been in our county, it is from the coming of the Saxons and their kindred tribes that we must date the beginning of English, as distinct from British, history.

But there was no united kingdom of England until

some four centuries after the first invaders had landed in Britain. Each tribe carved out for itself a territory, and the petty kingdoms thus formed were engaged in almost constant warfare with one another. Indeed, warfare to our Old English ancestors was the most honourable of all occupations. The heathen heaven of their religion was reserved for those heroes who fought bravely on the field of battle. Their princes claimed descent from Woden, the god of war, whom, together with Thor, the god of thunder, and many other gods and goddesses, they worshipped.

The Old English conquest involved the destruction of Christianity, which had been introduced during Roman time. But though paganism took its place in the districts conquered by the Old English, the worship of Christ still survived in Wales and the other parts of the west where the Britons had found refuge.

CHAPTER XI

THE WARS OF THE OLD ENGLISH KINGDOMS

In the struggle for mastery among the different kingdoms founded by the Old English peoples, our part of the country passed several times from one overlordship to another.

Originally, as we have seen, it was conquered by the West Saxons. For some time it was ruled by sub-kings as a part of the West Saxon dominion. Later, when for a time Northumbria took the leading place among the Old English states, our district passed under the influence of that kingdom. For a longer period it was ruled by Mercia, which supplanted Northumbria as the chief of the rival nations. While the struggle for supremacy was going on a great change in religion was gradually

taking place. Spreading from two sources, Christianity was by degrees supplanting paganism.

In 597, twenty years after the region east of the Severn had been wrested from the Welsh by the battle of Dyrham, St. Augustine, a missionary sent by Pope Gregory, landed in Kent. There he succeeded in bringing the king into the Christian fold and founded the see of Canterbury. Kent and other districts, under the influence of Augustine and his helpers, entered into that great section of the Christian Church which acknowledged the Pope of Rome as its head.

But, while England had been given over to the heathen invaders, Christianity was still the religion of the Welsh in their fastnesses of the western mountains. They did not, however, acknowledge the supremacy of Rome. Somewhere in or near our county, perhaps at Aust-on-Severn, perhaps at Down Ampney near Cirencester, Augustine met the British bishops and endeavoured in vain to persuade them to join the Christians of the western part of the continent of Europe in obedience to the Pope of Rome.

The conversion of the Hwiccas of Gloucestershire came neither from the priests of Augustine nor from the Christian Church in Wales.

Ireland, during the dark ages which, in our island, followed the withdrawal of the Romans, was a home of Christian learning and piety. The island produced many saints and teachers, one of the greatest of whom was St. Columba, who founded a monastery on the island of Iona in the Hebrides. The monks of Iona carried Christianity into Northumbria and thence over a great part of England. It was from this source that Gloucestershire received the new faith.

Penda, the warlike king who first raised Mercia to a great position, was a heathen. He slew the Christian King of Northumbria and restored the heathen temples. He fought also against the West Saxons and wrested Gloucestershire from them. Gloucestershire, therefore, became a part of Mercia, and continued to be Mercian for about a century and a half.

Penda perished in battle and was succeeded by his son. The new king married a Christian princess, and through her influence became a Christian. Thus for the first time our district came under the rule of a Christian prince. In the time of Ethelred of Mercia the grandson of Penda, the land of the Hwiccas was ruled by a viceroy or sub-king under the King of Mercia called Osric. This prince founded a number of monasteries and churches. Among them was a monastery at Gloucester, and there he was buried. A tomb, built many years afterwards, in the cathedral church of Gloucester commemorates Osric as the founder of the abbey.

For some time the Roman and the Celtic Churches in England remained at variance, although the points in dispute, were, in the main, trivial. Fortunately, however, the whole of Christian England finally entered into the Roman Church. The acceptance of the teachings of Christ marks the first great step in the civilization of the Old English peoples. Gradually the beauty of self-sacrifice and of devotion began, in some minds at least, to take the place of the old heathen ideals of brute courage and ferocity.

But the change of religion had, for a time, little influence upon the savage conflicts among the rival kingdoms. The lust of blood and delight in plunder still swayed Old English peoples. In these days of confused fighting the great King Offa raised Mercia to its highest pitch of power. He defeated the King of Kent, wrested Oxfordshire from Wessex, seized upon and murdered the King of East Anglia and annexed his kingdom. Warring against the Welsh, he drove them considerably westward. In our own county he drove them out of the Forest of Dean, and thus advanced the English boundary from the Severn to the Wye. To protect his conquests he built a great earthwork from Chepstow to Chester. This rampart is still known as Offa's Dyke. In Gloucestershire it may be traced in a number of places, for example, near the mouth of the Wye, at St. Briavels, and at Lydbrook.

The ancient English town of Winchcombe—the town in the winch or angle of the valley—was a place of residence of some of the Mercian kings, and a great abbey

was in early times founded in the town. A squared stone on the slope of Cleeve Hill stands on the site of an earlier stone called Huddlestone's Stone, which, according to tradition, marked the place where the King of Mercia parted from his guests, the King of Kent and the Archbishop of Canterbury, after they had visited him at Winchcombe.

Soon after the death of Offa, Kenulf mounted the throne of Mercia. He was killed in battle and was buried at Winchcombe, leaving as his successor a lad named Kenelm. During the childhood of Kenelm, his sister, Quenrade or Quendrida, who was much older than the young king, managed the affairs of Mercia. She was an ambitious and evil woman, and soon began to plot to remove the lad who stood between her and continued power. The story of her evil deed has come down to us mingled with all sorts of marvellous details, which serve to show us how largely superstition mingled with the beliefs of our Old English ancestors. The wicked sister, we are told, contrived with one of her servants to take the boy king far away from Winchcombe on pretence of hunting and to murder him in a secret place. So the boy king and the false servant rode forth from the palace at Winchcombe and came at last to Clent, on the farther side of Worcestershire. There the treacherous servant fell upon the king, struck off his head, and buried the remains in a pit beneath the shadow of a briar-bush. Quendrida now caused it to be given out that her brother had been killed by accident while hunting, and, seizing upon the royal power, she ruled for a time as the sovereign of Mercia.

But strange things, so the legendary history of the times tells us, happened to confound the guilty queen and to bring the truth to light. Even as life left the body of the murdered king a white dove fluttered heavenwards from his lips. At Clent men marvelled at strange happenings. A white cow went daily to the field where, unknown to all save the murderer, lay the body of the slaughtered king. And, though the cow ate nothing, yet her udders were daily filled with milk.

Moreover, a short time afterwards, while the Pope of Rome was saying Mass in the great church of St. Peter, a white dove fluttered in through an open window, laid a paper upon the high altar, and then flew away again into the outer air. The paper thus mysteriously brought bore upon it a message in a strange tongue which the Pope did not know. Therefore he sent to inquire for men from afar who might perchance be able to read the message thus brought, as by a miracle, to his holiness. At length a stranger from our distant island was found, and the writing proved to be in his native tongue. Then the Pope learnt from the scroll that the beheaded body of King Kenelm was lying beneath a briar-bush in the field called Cowbacke in Clent. Thereupon the Pope sent messengers to Winchcombe, in the distant kingdom of Mercia, and the men of the town went forth to find the body of their king. As the heavenly message had said, so it proved, and, beneath the briar-bush in Cowbacke at Clent, they found the body of the murdered lad.

Reverently they bore his remains homewards, and signs and wonders continued to follow the body. At every place where it was set down, as the mourning procession passed along the hills, a spring of clear fresh water burst forth. At length the bearers came within sight of Winchcombe, and, on the fair hill slopes above the town, they put down their sad burden while they rested for a last time on their way to the abbey. Where the body rested there burst forth as before a spring of pure cold water. To this day the spring is called St. Kenelm's Well, and from it the people of the ancient town still draw a supply of water.

Thence the bearers passed onwards towards the abbey, and as they passed the royal palace, lo ! the eyes of the wicked queen fell from her head, and in a few days she died and her body was cast into a ditch.

Meanwhile the body of the murdered king was buried with stately ceremonies in the abbey. And since so many signs and wonders had followed his remains he was honoured not only as king but as saint and martyr. For many centuries his tomb in the abbey was a place

of pilgrimage. The abbey has long since been destroyed, but in the noble church of the old Mercian town there may still be seen two ancient stone coffins. They are said to have once contained the bodies of King Kenulf, slain in battle against the East Angles, and of King Kenelm, murdered by his unnatural sister.

CHAPTER XII

ENGLAND AND THE DANES

The brief terms of power of Kenulf, Kenelm, and Quendrida are very typical of the fortunes of the Mercian sovereigns who succeeded Offa. One after another became king only to be slain or dethroned after a short reign. Thus the fortunes of the kingdom declined.

Meanwhile the power of Wessex rose steadily under a great king, Egbert, who began to rule soon after the death of Offa of Mercia. Warfare again broke out between the rival kingdoms, and Gloucestershire, the land of the Hwiccas, the debatable ground between Mercia and Wessex, naturally bore its share. Directly after the accession of Egbert, the Alderman—a title later supplanted by the Danish word earl—of the Hwiccas, rode over the ford of the Thames at Kempsford and attacked the West Saxons of Wiltshire under their alderman. There was a fierce fight in which both of the aldermen were slain, but victory rested with the West Saxons. More than twenty years later Egbert himself defeated the Mercians with great slaughter, and by the year 827 he had established himself as the chief ruler in England. Hence he is often spoken of as the first king of our country, though he was never the sole King of England.

The position of Wessex under Egbert was very similar to that of Mercia under Offa. But the supremacy of Wessex lasted and indeed expanded into the kingship of

England from two reasons. In the first place Egbert was succeeded by a line of kings, all of whom during a long period were able rulers, while some were really great monarchs. Moreover, the English peoples were opposed by invaders and were therefore forced to employ their forces against the common foe, instead of against one another. These invaders were the Norsemen or Danes, who in the eighth and ninth centuries began to harry our land just as the Old English tribes had done in the fifth and sixth. Like the Old English, they were sea-rovers, at first attacking the land for plunder only, but later settling as colonists. The Danes were still heathens, worshipping, under names in some cases slightly different, the same fierce old hero-gods whom the Old English had worshipped before their conversion. Their speech, too, was akin to the English tongue.

While Egbert was establishing Wessex in the leadership of the English kingdoms he had to fight against these invaders. The record of the reigns of his son and grandsons, too, is largely the story of their struggle with the 'heathen men', as the old Chronicle calls them. The youngest of these grandsons was the wise and heroic Alfred, during whose reign Gloucestershire first comes prominently into the story of the struggle.

Just three hundred years after the battle of Dyrham the Danes advanced from Devonshire, through Somerset, into Gloucestershire. Plundering the land and burning the churches they marched through the county and besieged and captured the town of Gloucester. Early next year they crossed into Wiltshire, harried the land of the West Saxons, and King Alfred himself was forced to take refuge in the Isle of Athelney in Somerset. Thence he sallied forth and utterly defeated the Northmen. For some years after this victory the land enjoyed comparative peace, though we read of the Danes appearing again at Cirencester in the following year.

The success of Alfred forced the Danes to come to terms. It was agreed that England should be divided; that the districts north and east of Watling Street, the ancient road from London to Chester, should belong to

the Danes, while the parts south and west of it should be ruled by Alfred. The government of the part of Mercia which thus fell to his share was entrusted by Alfred to a Mercian alderman, Ethelred, the husband of the king's daughter, Ethelfleda. By Ethelred and his wife the English part of Mercia was ruled with vigour and success.

Towards the end of Alfred's reign another Danish army invaded England and marched right across the country from Essex to the banks of the Severn. They were pursued by Ethelred, who came up with them at 'Buttingtune on the Severn Shore', in all probability Buttington, near Chepstow. There the Danes entrenched themselves, hoping to hold out long enough to enable their ships to come to their rescue. They were, however, closely besieged by the English. No Danish fleet came to their relief, their provisions were exhausted, and even their horses had been slaughtered for food. Hunger forced them to sally forth and a fierce fight took place in which great numbers of the Danes were slain.

After her husband's death, Ethelfleda, the 'Lady of the Mercians', ruled her territories with great wisdom and courage. She is one of the very few great women warriors of history, a wise and valiant princess. Together with her brother Edward, who had succeeded to the throne of Wessex on the death of Alfred, she built many fortresses to act as bulwarks against the Danes. When she died her body was brought to Gloucester and buried there in the Abbey Church of St. Peter.

The successor of Edward, Athelstan, established himself as sole King of England. For nearly seventy years after his time there were no fresh inroads of the Northmen. The population, however, of large parts of the north and east of England was now largely Danish in blood, though they recognized the descendants of Egbert as their king.

As Gloucestershire lay on the English side of the dividing line and was not a part of the Danish part of England, or Danelaw, the number of Danes who settled in the county was probably small. This probability receives some support from a consideration of the place-names in the county. In Northumbria and Eastern

Mercia places having Danish names are numerous, in our part of England they are few.

There are, however, some Gloucestershire villages which have the Danish termination 'thorpe' in an altered form. Thus in the south-eastern corner of the county are Southrop, Hatherop, and Bontherop, while between Gloucester and Stroud is Brookthrope. Possibly these represent small homesteads of Danes who may have settled down peaceably, and whom the English allowed to remain undisturbed. It has been suggested that the Forest of Dean gets its name from the Danes. There is, however, no doubt that the origin of the name is the Anglo-Saxon word dene, a valley. The Forest of Dean, therefore, means the Valley Forest. Similarly the Daneway may mean the valley-way or hollow-way, though in this case it is just possible that the name indicates a track followed by the Danes from the upper waters of the Thames to the banks of the Severn.

During the period of relief from the Danish invasions the greatest man in the English kingdom was the priest and statesman Dunstan. He was a strong supporter of the movement for a strict rule of life in the monasteries. He was powerfully aided by St. Oswald, the Bishop of Worcester. Our county formed a part of the diocese of Worcester until the Reformation, and Oswald's influence was strongly felt in it. He founded a religious house at Westbury.

Dunstan's reforms had the effect of strengthening the influence of the monks and the power of the Church became very great among the English people. Unfortunately a great deal of gross superstition was mingled with their respect for holy things. One king, Edwy, in vain opposed Dunstan, and his wife, Elgiva, is said to have been murdered with shocking barbarity by the monkish party near Gloucester. The story, however, is very doubtful.

Soon after the death of Dunstan, England's troubles from the Danish inroads began anew. A weak and foolish monarch, Ethelred Unrede, the king 'without counsel', sat upon the throne. Ethelred was quite incapable of organizing a national resistance to the invaders, and a

foolish endeavour to buy off the Danes by money payments only invited further attacks. The plan of murdering the Danes who had settled in England was then adopted. The scheme was equally treacherous and wicked and brought a terrible retribution. To revenge the death of his sister, who had perished in the massacre, Sweyn, the King of Denmark, himself invaded the country. Henceforth the Danish invasions ceased to be mere inroads and had the definite object of the conquest of the whole country.

During the reign of Ethelred we get the first historical evidence of the existence of Bristol, which was destined later to be for centuries the second town in the kingdom. Though many traces of Roman occupation have been found near Bristol, the first record of the town is borne upon two silver pennies of the time of Ethelred, which bear an inscription showing that they were made at Bristol. Though nothing is known of the earlier history of the town, the fact that money was coined there shows that by the time of Ethelred it had attained a position of considerable importance.

After the deaths of Sweyn and Ethelred the contest was carried on between two more equally matched antagonists. The English king, Edmund Ironside, fought with great courage and perseverance against Canute of Denmark. But Edmund had to contend not only against the Danes but also against treachery. Edric, the Alderman of Mercia, fought on the side of Canute. In a battle at Scoerston in Gloucestershire, Edmund, we are told, gained an advantage in the early stages of the fight. Thereupon Edric, it is said, cut off the head of one of his followers, who resembled Edmund, and fixing it upon a spear, lifted it high above the press of battle. The English, thinking it to be the head of their king, fell into such confusion that all the efforts of Edmund, who rushed bareheaded among his troops, could not win the victory that had seemed to be within his grasp. Nevertheless, the English cause met with so much success that the traitor Edric went over to the side of Edmund. He was, however, more dangerous as a treacherous ally than

as an open foe. At a great battle fought in Essex he again deserted the English, and the Danes in consequence won a great victory.

Edmund, with unshaken resolution, escaped into the west and raised a fresh force so formidable that the Danes consented to make a treaty with him. Edmund and Canute met in Gloucestershire, either at the Isle of Alney, near Gloucester, or on an island in the Severn, now possibly represented by a shoal in the river, opposite Deerhurst. There they agreed to divide the kingdom between them. In the same year, however, the valiant Edmund was murdered, his death being probably due to the traitor Edric. Canute now entered into undisturbed possession of the kingdom, and for a quarter of a century our country was ruled by Danish kings.

Canute divided the kingdom into four great earldoms and, during his reign, Godwin, an Englishman who rose to be the greatest subject in England, was made Earl of Wessex. Largely owing to Godwin's influence the English line of kings was restored after the death of the third of the Danish kings, and Edward, the son of Ethelred Unrede, ascended the throne.

CHAPTER XIII

THE FALL OF THE OLD ENGLISH KINGDOM

Though in the person of Edward the line of the Old English kings was restored, his reign really prepared the way for the last of the successful invasions of our country. The beginning of the Norman Conquest may well be said to date from the accession of Edward in 1042.

The king, whose piety and saintly life earned for him the titles of Saint and Confessor, was the son of Emma of Normandy, and was, therefore, half a Norman in blood. Moreover, he had been brought up in Normandy,

where he had lived so many years that he was Norman in speech, in customs, and by all the associations of education and youthful training.

He was above all things a devoted son of the Church, and, as he found the clergy of his new country much below the level of the Norman priests in attainments, he introduced many Normans to high positions in the English Church. Moreover, the friendships he had formed in Normandy induced him to welcome at his court many Norman nobles and knights, to whom he gave English estates. These priests and nobles exercised great influence with the king. Their power and the offices and honours bestowed upon them naturally aroused the jealousy of the English, whose leader, in opposition to them, was the great Earl Godwin.

The rivalry between the Norman and English parties at length led to armed rebellion against the king's authority. Eustace, Count of Boulogne, quarrelled with the people of Dover. The townsfolk fell upon his followers and slew some of them. The count complained to the king, and Edward at once called upon Godwin to punish the townsfolk.

Godwin not only refused, but assembled his forces and marched upon Gloucester, where the king was holding his court at the time. The earl pitched his camp on the hill near Painswick, where the local name of Castle Godwin possibly commemorates the event. Meanwhile King Edward had called the Earls of Mercia and Northumbria to his aid. No fighting, however, took place. A conference was held at Painswick, and it was agreed to refer the case to the decision of the Witan. The result was that Godwin and his sons Sweyn and Harold were outlawed.

The English earls were obliged to fly for their lives. Godwin escaped to the Continent, while his sons fled to Bristol. There a ship belonging to Sweyn was lying, and in it the brothers escaped to Ireland. The English earls, however, were not long away. In a few months they returned, and were so strongly supported that many of the Normans were driven from the country.

The House of Godwin was now supreme in the country,

but the earl did not long survive his triumph. He died during the year following his return, and as his son Sweyn was by this time also dead, his possessions and his power passed into the hands of his son Harold.

During the later years of the reign of the pious but feeble King Edward, Harold was by far the greatest man in England, both in peace and war. His chief exploit during this period was a successful attack upon Wales. He assembled a force at Gloucester, with which he vigorously attacked the Welsh, while, at the same time, his fleet harried their coast. His campaign was so successful that the Welsh submitted and even sent the head of their king to Harold as a peace offering.

The talents displayed by Harold increased the hold upon his countrymen which his position as the national leader gave him, and when the king died in 1066, the earl occupied a position of commanding influence. Hence, though he had no right to the throne by virtue of descent, he was able to secure his selection by the Witan as king. His election was, no doubt, largely due to the fact that Edgar, the rightful king in blood, was but a lad, and, moreover, possessed neither ability nor strength of character. Further, it was known that William, Duke of Normandy, claimed the throne of England, and Harold was the one Englishman who had given proof of such talents as were needed to repel the threatened attack.

The invasion of Duke William broke upon the land a few days after Harold had defeated an invading army of Northmen under his rebel brother Tostig and the King of Norway. The Duke, aided by the support of the Pope and followed by an army of Normans and of adventurers from many parts of Western Europe, landed on the south coast. Harold hurried thither to meet him, and in the decisive battle of Hastings fell fighting desperately.

By the death of Harold the English lost the only leader capable of uniting them in resistance to the Normans. Though gallant bands carried on a vain struggle for a time in various parts of the country, the fate of England was decided by a single battle. Gloucestershire took little or no part in such resistance as was made to the Conqueror

after the battle of Hastings. Indeed when, two years after the great fight, the sons of Harold, who like their father before them had taken refuge in Ireland, appeared in the Avon with a fleet of fifty-two ships manned by Irish sailors, the men of Bristol beat them off when they attacked the town. The invaders then passed into Somerset, where they were met by a force under an English noble named Eadnoth, who fell in the battle. This noble was the father of Harding, the founder of the long line of the great Gloucestershire family of the Fitz Hardings, the Lords of Berkeley.

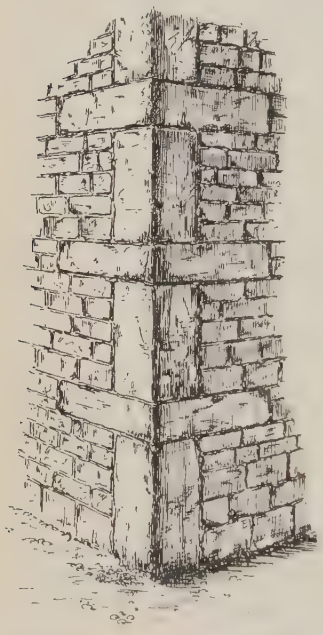
CHAPTER XIV

SAXON BUILDINGS IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE

The old churches of our country are the chief remaining memorials of the ages which elapsed between the time of the general acceptance of Christianity in England and the breach with the Church of Rome in the sixteenth century. Throughout those long centuries great men gave lavishly of their wealth and craftsmen lovingly of their skill to build and adorn the churches. Hence these ancient buildings furnish us with a history in stone of the growth of skill in craftsmanship and of the sense of beauty during the Middle Ages.

The first churches built by the Old English were, however, not of stone but of wood. 'There was a time,' says the Venerable Bede, 'when there was not a stone church in all the land, but the custom was to build them all of wood.' The Old English also built the houses of their thegns and princes of wood. Probably the ancient moats at Leckhampton and Haresfield in our county once surrounded the log halls of ancient chieftains. Haresfield Moat resembles the one at Leckhampton, and both are probably examples of early vale forts, possibly

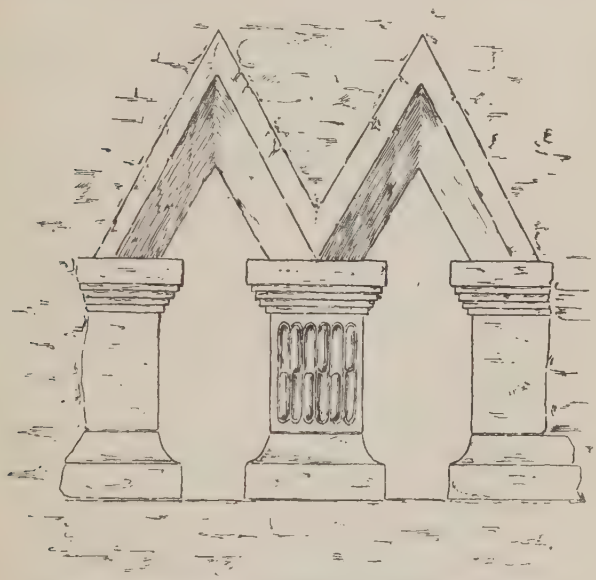
of ninth or tenth-century date. The moat at Leckhampton stands in a field near the Church. It is irregular in shape and has an average width of about twenty feet. Even to the present day it is half full of water. It is probably of early date, for no extensive remains of masonry, such as we should expect to find if the building had been of Norman or later times, have been discovered. Such traces of mason's work as have been found are few, and probably represent the foundations of a bridge across the moat. It is reasonable, therefore, to conclude that the main buildings were of wood, which have long since perished by the swift action of fire, or by the slow process of natural decay.



Saxon 'Long and Short' Work

Wood continued to be the chief material for the construction of the dwelling-houses of even great men among our Old English forefathers down to the time of the Norman Conquest. There is, however, ample evidence that before that time English masons had reached a considerable degree of skill in the art of building in stone. The piety of our ancestors demanded for the House of God a more durable and noble material than the logs which sufficed for the dwelling-places of thegn or earl. Scattered about our country are a considerable number of stone-built churches, which show more or less Saxon work. They are most numerous in the eastern parts of England. Frequently the walls are decorated by narrow strips of masonry. The general effect is sometimes called 'stone-carpentry', and has led some people to believe that the

Saxon builder imitated in stone the interlacing beams to which he was accustomed in woodwork. It is now, however, more generally held that Saxon architecture grew out of the imitation of Roman buildings. There were, of course, the remains of many Roman buildings in stone and brick in our own country for the Saxons to



Saxon Triangular Arches, Deerhurst Church

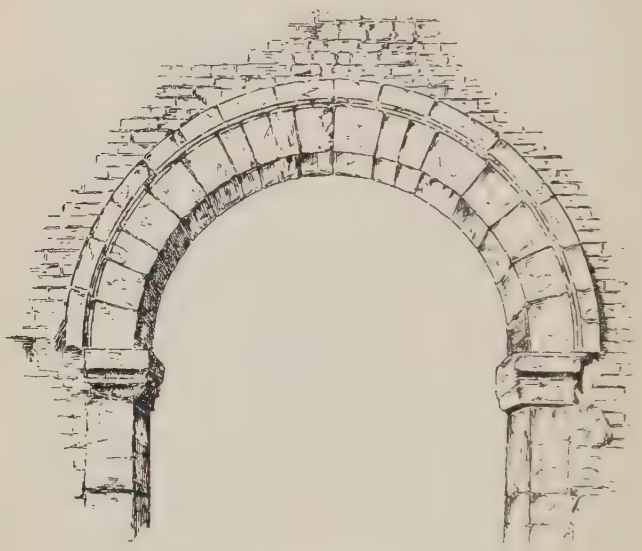
imitate. Moreover, the Christian faith led many English to visit Rome, the centre of their religion.

For a western county, Gloucestershire is rich in remains of Saxon churches. The little Severn-side village of Deerhurst, near Tewkesbury, is especially so. Not only does it possess a complete Saxon monastic church, to which, however, later additions have been made, but also a complete Saxon chapel.

As early as the beginning of the ninth century there was an abbey at Deerhurst. The first building, however,

is said to have been destroyed by the Danes. At some later date the abbey was rebuilt, and for a time flourished exceedingly. The main body of the church stands to-day much the same as it was some ten centuries ago.

Not a hundred yards from the church stands a little Saxon chapel, to which in later years a timbered dwelling-



Saxon Arch, Deerhurst

house was added. The building was not recognized as a Saxon structure until comparatively recently. It then became evident that an inscribed stone, preserved in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, referred to this chapel and not, as had been previously supposed, to the church. The stone informs us that ' Duke Odda ordered this Royal Hall to be built and dedicated to the honour of the Holy Trinity ', and it fixes the date of the building as the fourteenth year of the reign of Edward the Confessor, 1056. The little chapel has a nave $25\frac{1}{2}$ feet long, with

a round-headed arch leading into a chancel 14 feet in length.

These ancient buildings at Deerhurst furnish examples of some of the chief features of Saxon masons' work. Perhaps the most noticeable is the use of 'long and short' work, the stones being set alternately upright and crosswise. This kind of work, however, is not an unfailing guide, for similar long and short work was used centuries later. Another common feature is the use of triangular shapes for the heads of windows and doorways. When two or more of these are set side by side they are generally separated by stumpy, baluster-shaped columns. A pair of such triangle-headed lights with stone baluster between them occurs in the tower of Deerhurst Church. The Saxons did not always employ these triangular forms for the openings in their walls. Sometimes the top of a doorway or window was simply a flat stone laid crosswise. Sometimes, as in the chancel arch in Duke Odda's Chapel, a semicircular arch resembling simple Norman work was built.

In some cases, as at Ashchurch in our county, it is a matter of dispute whether certain features of a church are Saxon or Early Norman. It is, however, generally agreed that a number of Gloucestershire churches besides the Deerhurst buildings contain more or less Saxon work. The nave and chancel of Coln Rogers Church, the main fabric of the church at Daglinworth, the north and south doorways at Miserden, are examples ; while there are less important remains of the work of the Old English masons in Bibury Church.

CHAPTER XV

THE HAND OF THE OPPRESSOR

The hand of the Conqueror lay heavy upon the English people, and he ruled his conquered dominions with severity. While he was hunting in the Forest of Dean, for example, he heard of a great rising of the English in

the North. Hurrying thither he devastated the whole district between Humber and Tees, so that for many years the most fertile part of the north of England lay desert and almost unpeopled. Nearly all the land in England was taken from the Saxon lords and thanes. William himself kept vast possessions, especially such as had belonged to the Saxon kings. The lands which had belonged to the Church were suffered to remain in the hands of the abbeys and monasteries. In most parts of England these church lands covered a large fraction of the area; in Gloucestershire perhaps a third of the county. As Norman prelates and abbots in most cases took the place of Saxon churchmen, the control of the Church lands also passed into the hands of the ruling class.

A great amount of land still remained at the king's disposal. Some of it he gave to foreign abbeys, but the bulk he used to reward his Norman followers. In Gloucestershire, as in nearly all other counties, no one man was allowed to possess the whole shire. William was determined not to allow any of his barons to set up as petty kings within their territories. He knew how the power of Godwin and Harold had almost overshadowed the throne. He knew, too, that in France the dukes and counts ruled as independent sovereigns. He himself, indeed, as Duke of Normandy, often set his overlord, the King of France, at defiance. In order to prevent the great nobles in England from imitating his own example, William saw to it that the manors granted to them were widely scattered, so that they nowhere had a great area within which their power was so great as to rival that of the king. Hence in Gloucestershire the land was held by a considerable number of Norman lords, who held few or many manors according as the king valued their services. In return they had to make him certain payments on certain fixed occasions, and to provide him with certain armed forces when called upon.

At the time of the Conquest the greatest English lord in our county was named Brictric. The chief seat of this lord was Tewkesbury, and his wide possessions covered many thousands of acres of fertile land. It is said that

while King Edward the Confessor was still reigning in England, this Saxon lord, Brictric, paid a visit to the court of the Count of Flanders. There he met the Count's daughter, Matilda, who fell in love with the powerful English noble. Brictric, however, did not respond to her affection, and Matilda, if the story be true, never forgave the injury to her slighted charms. The changes of fate gave her the opportunity for revenge, for she became the wife of Duke William of Normandy. When the Conquest made him King of England she took the opportunity to avenge herself upon Brictric. His broad lands were confiscated and passed into the possession of the king.

Our knowledge as to the manner in which the land was divided among the followers of the Conqueror, together with much information as to the condition of England during his reign and that of the Confessor, is drawn from the records of the great survey which William ordered while keeping his court of Gloucester. William, like our early kings in general, moved his court from place to place. Unless pressing circumstances required his presence elsewhere, he generally, or at the least frequently, spent Christmastide at Gloucester. No doubt the reason for this was that the nearness of the town to the borders of Wales, often threatened by the forays of the Welsh, rendered the frequent presence of the king advisable in order that he might keep a watchful eye upon the defences of the Marches.

The king was at Gloucester in 1085, in midwinter, and there, the Chronicle says, had 'very deep speech' with his advisers about the land and about 'how it was peopled, and by what men'. As a result of his conference, the king sent out agents throughout England to find out the extent of every manor, the dues payable to the king, and the holders of each estate. So narrowly did he cause the survey to be made that 'there was not one single hide or yard of land, nor even an ox, nor a cow, nor a swine, that was not set down in his writ'.

The Domesday Book, which contained the results of the survey, showed the king the value of each estate and the dues payable to him. It further enabled him to judge, by

comparison with the returns given in the survey for the time of King Edward the Confessor, how the estates were being managed. Domesday Book shows us that the population of Gloucestershire at the time of the survey was about 50,000. The number was large in comparison with that of most other English counties at the time. Gloucester, Tewkesbury, Winchcombe, and Bristol, were the largest towns. Bristol was evidently not a place of ancient importance, for although the survey shows that it was a borough, it was included in the manor of Barton. The town, no doubt, owed its rise to the advantage of its position for trade, particularly with Ireland. Unfortunately an important part of this trade was a traffic in slaves. Domesday Book shows that there were an exceptionally large proportion of these unfortunate beings in Gloucestershire at the time of the Conquest. The slaves in the whole of England appear to have been only about one-tenth of the population, but in Gloucestershire a quarter of all the people in the county were bondsmen.

William the Conqueror endeavoured to put a stop to the foreign trade in slaves without success. At length the exhortations of the saintly Wulfstan, Bishop of Worcester, in whose see Bristol was situated, prevailed upon the townsfolk. They gave up the traffic, but only for a time, and, when a period of disorder relaxed the reins of government, the infamous trade was resumed.

Domesday Book shows how largely the native English holders of land had been dispossessed. Only a few Saxon names of landowners occur, and the estates held by them, moreover, were generally small. Among them we find the name Brictric. Possibly this was the English nobleman whose estates are said to have been confiscated through the enmity of Queen Matilda. It has been conjectured that, on the queen's death, William restored to him a fragment of his former possessions, though according to some the dispossessed Brictric died in prison. Certainly a Brictric was, at the time of the survey, holding lands at Leckhampton and at Woodchester.

Another Saxon holder of land was Harding, the son of that Eadnoth who fell in battle against the sons of King

Harold. This Harding probably, though not certainly, held the office of the king's reeve, or steward of Bristol. The reeve's duty was to collect the king's due from the tenants of the crown. As the amount he had to pay was a fixed sum, he could, if he were a hard man, enrich himself by wringing more from the tenants than was due. It seems probable that it was largely from this office that Harding amassed the great wealth which laid the foundation of the fortunes of his descendants, the Fitz Hardings.

Other Saxon thanes holding lands at the Domesday Survey bore the names Alwold, Cuenild, Elwald, and Oswald. Two names of landholders, Chetel and Edric Ketelson, speak of Danish blood, while there is one Welsh name, Madoch.

To establish his power the Conqueror built, or allowed to be built, strong castles in various parts of the country. In place of the earthworks of the Saxons, the Normans built, upon a natural or artificial mound, a great embattled wall surrounded by a deep and wide moat. The moat was crossed by a drawbridge, the outer end of which was defended against surprise by a fort. Within the area enclosed by the castle wall were dwellings, stables, and storehouses. But the central and most important part of the castle was the great keep, solidly and squarely built and with walls of great thickness, which formed the last and strongest defence of the whole building. The chief Norman castles, built for the general purposes of the kingdom in our county, were erected at Gloucester and Bristol. These places were chosen because they commanded the valleys of the Severn and the Avon respectively, and because they were, moreover, well placed for purposes of attack and defence with regard to Wales. The counties bordering upon Wales, the Welsh marches, were long the scene of almost constant warfare. The Welsh often made plundering incursions into England, while the Norman Lord Marchers retaliated by inroads into Wales. Hence along the line of the marches castles were built, the ruins of the southernmost of which, Chepstow Castle, still crown the steep cliff by the side of the Wye, just outside the borders of our county.

Bristol Castle occupied a remarkably strong natural position. It was built on rising ground between the Avon and its tributary the Frome. Besides guarding the valley of the Avon and protecting the town, at that time rapidly growing in importance, it furnished a base for operations against Wales by sea.

The Conqueror himself was careful to prevent as far as possible the building of strong castles by his nobles upon their estates. Later, however, when less powerful kings sat upon the throne, castles were built at Berkeley, Brimpsfield, St. Briavels, Sudeley, and other places in the county.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SONS OF THE CONQUEROR

Upon the death of the Conqueror, his second son, William, known as Rufus, or the Red, seized the throne of England. Many of the Norman barons, however, would have preferred the rule of the eldest son of the Conqueror, Robert, who became Duke of Normandy.

Geoffrey of Coutances, a Norman bishop who held Bristol Castle, was one of Robert's supporters. Using the castle as a base, the soldiers of the rebel barons harried the lands of the king's supporters in Somerset and South Gloucestershire. Bath was burnt and plundered, and Berkeley attacked and destroyed. The northern part of Gloucestershire was saved, however, mainly by Bishop Wulfstan. The rebellion was at last quelled, and the Red King established upon the throne.

One of the few Norman nobles who had remained faithful to William was Robert Fitz Hamon, and upon the death of Geoffrey he was put in charge of Bristol Castle. He also held the lordship of Tewkesbury and broad estates in Gloucestershire and elsewhere. His wealth and power laid the foundation of the great

earldom of Gloucester. Fitz Hamon was prominent in the warfare with the Welsh during the reign of Rufus. The king himself led two expeditions into Wales without much success. He therefore contented himself with building and strengthening castles along the marches. At the same time, in order to encourage the Norman barons to carry the war into Welsh territory, he promised them a free grant of all the lands they could conquer. The policy was very successful. A great part of the lowlands of Wales was soon conquered by Norman adventurers without expense to the king. The most important of these conquests were in South Wales, and in the struggle Fitz Hamon took a leading part. He conquered Glamorgan and established himself at Cardiff, where a castle was built.

In his dealings with his barons William carried on the policy of his father. He repressed their power and, though he was himself harsh and oppressive, yet the king's taxes, heavy though they were, were lighter to be borne by the people than was the tyranny of the barons when a weak or careless king allowed them to do as they pleased. In personal character, however, Rufus was one of the worst of our kings. Even the Church was plundered by him. When bishops or abbots died, William kept their sees or abbeys vacant, while he himself enjoyed the vast revenues which thus fell into his hands. After the death of the Archbishop of Canterbury he refused to appoint another primate, and, for several years, he diverted the great sums due to the archbishop into his own treasury.

Remonstrances were of no avail. The headstrong, irreligious king scoffed at such prayers as those of his council at Gloucester when he held his court there according to custom in the winter of 1092. But shortly after, William, while at the village of Alveston, near Bristol, fell ill, and was like to die. He was carried back to Gloucester, and, in his sickness, fear came upon him. Now Anselm, the Abbot of Bec in Normandy, was in Gloucestershire at the time. He had come to England upon the business of his abbey, and had not hesitated to upbraid the king for his evil life. With the terror of death

upon him, William sent for the saintly Anselm, who was staying at Arle, only a few miles distant. The king confessed to him, and, believing death to be near, consented to appoint a new Archbishop of Canterbury. To the consternation of Anselm the king's choice fell upon him. The abbot refused to accept so great a place. He pleaded his age, his distaste for public affairs, his lack of fitness for the duties. His protests were in vain.

The pastoral staff, the symbol of the archbishop's authority, was brought, thrust by force into his clenched right hand, and he was hurried, pale and trembling, into the abbey church, where a service of praise proclaimed the joy of all that Anselm, however reluctantly, had been raised to the chair of St. Augustine.

The new archbishop soon proved that his reluctance to receive the great office had not arisen from timidity. The vices of the king, who returned to his evil courses when his health was restored, found in him a resolute and unflinching opponent.

During the time of Rufus all Christian Europe was deeply stirred by the great movement which led to the Crusades. The call appealed strongly to the bold adventurous spirit of Duke Robert of Normandy, and in order to join the First Crusade he pledged his dukedom to his brother William for a large sum of money.

While Robert was still absent in the east, death came suddenly upon the Red King. One day in August he went forth to hunt in the New Forest in Hampshire. How he met his death no man can say, though many stories were told. His body, transfixed with an arrow, was found in a forest glade by some humble charcoal-burners. Men saw the words of prophecy in the sermon preached in the abbey church of Gloucester just before the king's death : 'Lo ! the bow from on high is bent against the wicked and the arrow is drawn from the quiver.' The news of the death of Rufus came to his younger brother Henry while he himself was also hunting in the New Forest. He at once hurried to Winchester, seized the royal treasures, and by his prompt measures secured the throne to the exclusion of his brother Robert.

But, as it was certain that Robert would claim the throne upon his return, Henry found it expedient to endeavour to secure the support of the native English. He had an initial advantage in the fact that he alone of the Conqueror's sons had been born in England. After he became king, he married an English princess of the old royal blood, and he granted a charter based upon the laws of Edward the Confessor.

The wisdom of Henry so strengthened his position that he was able to drive out of his kingdom the Norman nobles who opposed him. Moreover, he was also able to carry the war into Robert's dukedom of Normandy. The unfortunate Robert was defeated and taken prisoner, and was kept in confinement for many years in Bristol and Cardiff Castles. When he died he was buried in the abbey church at Gloucester. A Latin inscription, still to be seen in the cathedral, bears the meaning, 'Here lies Robert the Short,' and in the choir is his tomb, surmounted by a coloured effigy carved in oak.

In the same battle which led to the long captivity of Duke Robert, the great Gloucestershire lord, Robert Fitz Hamon, who fought on the side of King Henry, was wounded so sorely that he died. He left no sons, and his vast possessions thus fell to his daughter Mabel.

In order to secure the wealth of the Fitz Hamons for his natural son, Robert, the king arranged a marriage for him with the heiress. The lady, so the old chronicler Robert of Gloucester tells us, was at first unwilling. The king, however, we are told, gained her consent by making his son Earl of Gloucester. As a matter of fact, however, it was probably not till long after Fitz Hamon's death that Robert Fitz le Roy became Earl of Gloucester. The line of nobles who bore this title included some of the most powerful men of the later Middle Ages.

The great stronghold of Robert, Earl of Gloucester, was the castle of Bristol, which came to him with his wife. A castle had, as we have seen, been built there in the time of the Conqueror. Strong as it was, however, Robert built in its stead a still stronger fortress. On a vast mound facing the eastern side of the town he built a great

square keep larger than any other in the kingdom, save only the keeps of Colchester and the Tower of London. Within the circuit of the castle walls there were also a splendid banqueting hall and a chapel for the garrison.

CHAPTER XVII

RIVALS FOR THE THRONE; THE 'BRISTOL WAR'

The reign of Henry I had been on the whole a time of peace and of orderly progress. The king enforced justice, and was strong enough and wise enough to keep even the great nobles within the scope of the law. But the death by drowning of his son left him no heir to sit upon the throne. True, during the lifetime of the king, the great barons swore to support his daughter Matilda and to make her queen when the king should die.

But many of the warlike barons of Norman times disliked the idea of having a woman to rule over them. The monarch was still looked upon as being especially a war-lord, the natural leader of the forces of the nation in battle. Hence, rather than have a queen to rule over them, many of the barons, upon the death of Henry, were ready to follow any noble who could advance a plausible claim to the throne. A claimant was found in Stephen, the son of Henry's sister, Adela, and, as he was supported by most of the barons of England, he was crowned king.

Naturally his claim was disputed by Matilda, who had the powerful support of her half-brother, the Earl of Gloucester. The earl took the first open step in opposition to Stephen three years after the king had obtained the crown. Earl Robert was at that time with his half-sister in Normandy, and thence he sent a message of defiance to Stephen, who replied by seizing most of the great estates in England which belonged to the earl.

But one of these possessions was too strong for the king to capture. This was the great castle which Earl Robert had built at Bristol, and which continued to be throughout the war the chief stronghold and head-quarters of the party in favour of Matilda. So important was Bristol in the struggle that one chronicle calls the conflicts between Stephen and Matilda ' the Bristol war '.

The doings of Stephen are recounted by an old chronicler, who gives us an interesting glimpse of the Bristol of those days. He tells us that it had the strongest position of any town in England, being built upon a tongue-shaped promontory between two rivers. Moreover, the waters of its rivers—the Avon and the Frome—were turned back at every tide, so that a deep harbour was made fit to hold a thousand ships. Thus the town seemed ' to float on the waters and to be seated on their banks '. The city was already one of the richest in the kingdom, and to it ships from far and near brought merchandise. It was, too, the outlet of commerce from a rich and fertile part of England. The walled city, strong both in natural and artificial defences, was further strengthened by the great castle which Earl Robert had built. The huge keep was surrounded by walls with strong towers and bastions at intervals, upon which were mounted great engines of war. It was crowded with knights and foot-soldiers eager to serve the great earl and to share in the plunder which civil war would place within the grasp of the bold and adventurous.

Earl Robert's defiance of King Stephen marks the beginning of the most terrible time of violence and cruelty that our county has endured since the Norman Conquest. In order to curry favour with the barons the king allowed them to build castles upon their estates. Within these strongholds some of them sheltered themselves with bands of ruffians in their service. Secure in their fortresses and conscious that there was no longer any power in the kingdom strong enough to bring them to justice, they worked their will upon the land. The country far and wide was plundered, innocent folk were tortured in castle dungeons to extort ransom,

peaceable wayfarers were robbed and murdered. So terrible were the times that great stretches of lands were left desolate and thousands perished of hunger. 'Men said openly that Christ and His saints were asleep,' says the chronicler.

This awful period of civil war and of unchecked disorder affected Gloucestershire with great severity. Soon after Earl Robert had openly taken the side of his half-sister Matilda, the garrison of Bristol sallied forth and attacked Bath. In the first expedition they were beaten back, but later they captured the bishop and extorted a ransom under the threat of hanging him. It seems, too, that the townsfolk in the general disorder resumed their evil trade in slaves, kidnapping men and women and shipping them off to Ireland.

King Stephen was forced to move against the turbulent town and the rebel garrison of its castle. He formed the siege of the fortress, but its strength was so great and it was so well furnished for war that faintheartedcounsels prevailed. The king turned aside from the stronghold of Earl Robert, his most dangerous and ablest enemy, and proceeded to attack the weaker castles of some of the lesser lords who favoured the cause of Matilda. In so doing he undoubtedly made a mistake. So long as Bristol Castle was held by the earl there was a secure place-of-arms for Matilda's party. Moreover, the town commanded the communications with Gloucester, the Welsh marches, and the Norman settlements in Wales whence the earl mainly drew his strength.

In 1139 Earl Robert left Normandy and, accompanied by Matilda, landed on the south coast. Leaving his half-sister at Arundel, the earl rode rapidly with only twelve attendants to his castle at Bristol. There he was joined later on by Matilda, and thither, too, came a powerful baron who was, next to the Earl of Gloucester, the ablest and staunchest of her supporters. This was Miles de Gloucester, or Milo of Gloucester, the sheriff of the county and the commander of Gloucester Castle. He and the Sheriff of Hereford were the most powerful of the Lord Marchers, and ruled the Welsh border 'from Severn

to the sea'. Milo welcomed Matilda to his castle at Gloucester, and by her was given St. Briavels Castle and the control of the Forest of Dean. In her service he fought long and strenuously. He burnt Worcester, captured Winchcombe Castle, and was one of the leaders of her forces at the battle of Lincoln. In this battle King Stephen was taken prisoner, and was brought to Bristol Castle to be kept in safe custody. At first he was treated leniently and was allowed to go where he would within the castle walls, but, having been found out of bounds, he was afterwards put in chains. His captivity, however, only lasted a few months. In his turn Earl Robert was taken prisoner and it was agreed that the king and the earl should be exchanged.

A good deal of confused fighting continued for a time in our county. The castles at Cirencester, Beverstone, and Sudeley were attacked by Stephen's forces, and fights of little importance to the result of the struggle took place. Meanwhile the son of Matilda, the young Prince Henry, a boy of nine years, was brought over from the Continent and lived for four years in Bristol Castle. Earl Robert, who was himself a man of some learning and fond of the society of learned men, provided for the education of his nephew. It is therefore probable that the taste for learning which the young prince, afterwards King Henry II, acquired, was largely due to the influence of his uncle Robert.

The cause of Matilda received a blow through the death of Milo of Gloucester. That noble, who had been made Earl of Hereford, was killed by an arrow shot at a deer while he was hunting in the Forest of Dean on Christmas Eve in the year 1143. Apart from his career as a soldier, Earl Milo is memorable in the history of our county as the founder of Llanthony Priory at Gloucester. His son, the second Earl of Hereford, afterwards founded Flaxley Abbey in the Forest of Dean, probably on the spot where his father was killed.

But a still more serious blow to the cause of Matilda was the death at Bristol of Earl Robert of Gloucester. He had been the great bulwark of her claims, and had

proved himself the ablest soldier and statesman of his time. So long as his counsels prevailed the cause of Matilda flourished ; when they were neglected, her hopes declined.

Some years later her son Henry, now Duke of Normandy, and lord of other vast possessions in France,

Llanthony Priory, Gloucester, in 1842

returned to England to enforce his claim to the throne. Fortunately the horrors of the civil war were not renewed. An arrangement was made by which it was agreed that the prince should succeed to the throne on Stephen's death. Henry did not have to wait long for his inheritance, for soon afterwards Stephen died, after an anarchy which had brought untold miseries upon the land.

CHAPTER XVIII

NORMAN BUILDINGS IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE

The rapid progress which the Normans made in the arts before the Conquest was no doubt largely due to the fact that they settled upon the Continent and were thus brought directly under the influence of the remains of Roman civilization. In their new home the Normans developed a massive and powerful style of building which was derived from Roman sources and which we know as Norman architecture.

When the Normans had planted themselves in our country they rapidly began to stud the face of it with great buildings, mainly of two kinds. They were a military garrison in a hostile land, a mere handful of conquerors in the midst of a host of Saxons who returned their scorn by deadly hatred. Therefore they built great castles to protect themselves and to tighten their hold upon the lands of the dispossessed Saxons.

The Normans were also great church builders. They were, as a rule, a pious people with a great respect for the Church and for its servants. But perhaps the zeal with which they entered upon the task of church building arose partly from the specially religious character of the Conquest. Doubtless the motives of the Conqueror and his followers were the worldly ones of ambition and love of plunder. The Pope, however, had especially blessed the enterprise, and the blessing of the head of the Christian Church gave it something of the character of a holy war. Thus many a member of the motley host that followed the consecrated banner of Duke William may well have thought that he owed some portion of his new-gotten wealth to God, as a thank-offering for His manifest blessing upon the enterprise. Certainly the Normans gave with no niggard hand. Great numbers of the old Saxon buildings were levelled to the ground. In their place arose, on the one hand, the great monasteries, such

as Gloucester and Tewkesbury, where cloistered monks dwelt secluded from the world. On the other hand, in nearly every village arose the parish church, where men immersed in the affairs of the work-a-day world might find religious consolation.

The great Norman abbeys and the lesser parish churches differ vastly in size and magnificence. Yet the general style of building is the same, and its distinguishing features are easily recognized. The most striking feature of a Norman building is its massive construction. Every part is, apparently, enormously strong in comparison with the more graceful styles which followed later. The second great characteristic is the use of massive circular columns supporting arches, while the arches themselves are nearly always semicircular in shape. The general effect of the massive proportions and simple forms of Norman architecture is one of grandeur, almost of gloom. Few, however, can look upon the nave of Gloucester Cathedral or of Tewkesbury Abbey without being deeply impressed by the austere majesty of the ancient Norman work. It is also to be remembered that the masonry, now so grimly white, was of old time relieved by the gleam of gold and colour, and that the gloom of the building was broken by the lights that flickered before the shrines of saints and martyrs.

The ancient abbey churches of Gloucester and Tewkesbury are two of the finest Norman buildings remaining to us. Externally, the great church at Gloucester, now the Cathedral, does not at first sight appear to be a Norman building, though a closer examination soon reveals many features of that style. When, however, we enter the much later south porch and pass through the ancient doors, themselves noble examples of Norman wood and iron work, into the body of the church, we find ourselves in a majestic Norman nave, which in essentials is much as it was in the days of Abbot Serlo, its builder. Vast, simple, round columns separate the nave from the aisles and are crowned by semicircular arches. Above these are seen a row of much smaller arches. The great Norman piers or columns of Gloucester nave have no

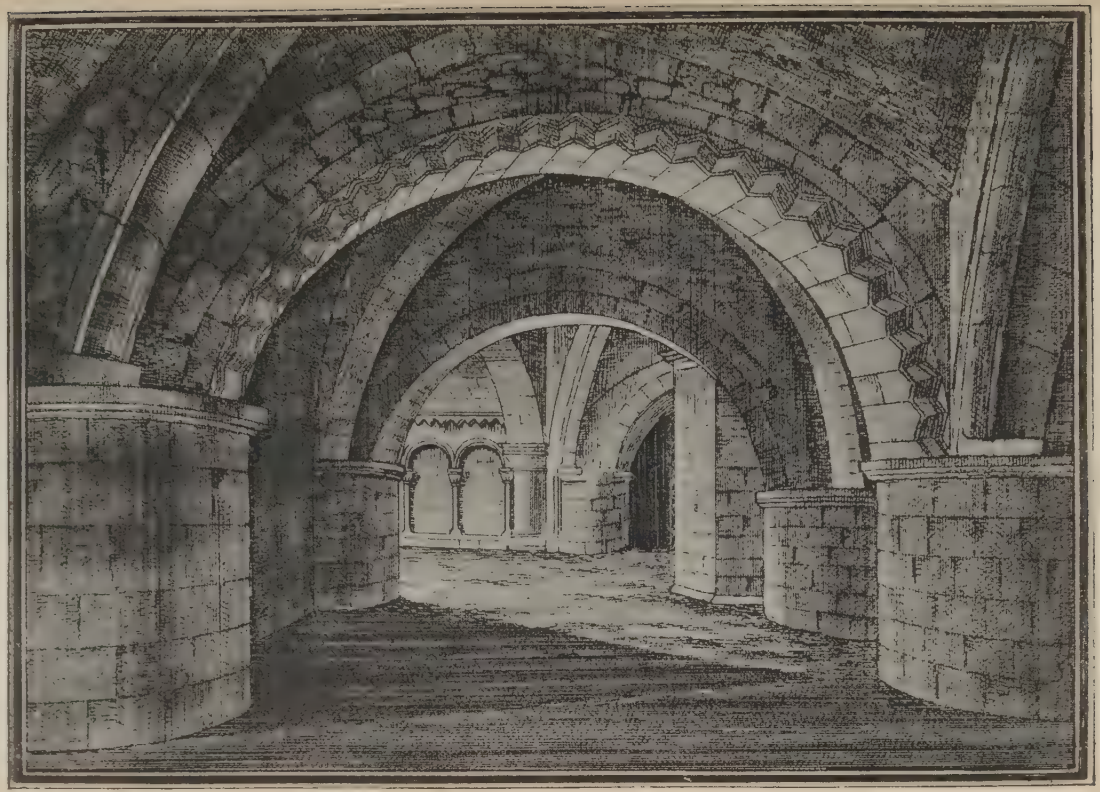
TEWKESBURY ABBEY, NORTH-WEST VIEW

parallel in England, except at Tewkesbury. They rise to the exceptional height of thirty feet, and are some six feet in diameter. The columns in the nave of Tewkesbury are of much the same size, and this, together with other points of resemblance in the buildings, leads to the conclusion that both abbeys were probably the work of the same architect.

The Normans employed a number of simple but varied ornaments to decorate their masonry. A zigzag ornament is very common, and other forms, such as the billet, chevron, and nail-head, often occur.

But much more than the nave of Gloucester is Norman in origin. Beneath the ground level is the crypt, or under-church, with its squat round pillars and arches. Indeed, the whole 'shell' of the church is Norman. Even the soaring choir, the airy grace of which contrasts so strikingly with the severely stern Norman nave, is but a stone veil thrown cunningly at a later date over the old Norman masonry.

The exterior of the abbey church of Tewkesbury, unlike that of Gloucester, strikes the observer immediately as almost entirely Norman. The eye is drawn up at once to the massive tower—one of the finest Norman towers now standing—so different in its four-square solidity to the graceful tower which later craftsmen built at Gloucester. Tewkesbury tower is pure Norman, with the exception of the pinnacles and battlements. The western end of the church has given rise to no little speculation. Here we find a vast recessed Norman arch, sixty-five feet high, and more than half as wide. It is in itself a magnificent arch, but it appears too large for the size of the wall which it pierces—'a jewel too large for its setting.' Perhaps the builders intended it to be flanked by two great western towers, or to be the central feature of a single great tower. If either surmise be correct the original design was never carried out. Internally the nave at Tewkesbury strikingly resembles the nave at Gloucester. Similar vast simple towering columns carry the great semicircular arches, which, at Tewkesbury, are very plain. Above are the second row of semicircular arches, which are alike in



both churches in being stunted in size in comparison with the vast piers and arches which separate nave from aisles.

Many other smaller churches in Gloucestershire contain more or less Norman work. Indeed, probably a half, or

Norman Doorway, Swindon, Gloucestershire

even a majority, of the ancient churches of the county contain some Norman work. The old Norman abbey which Robert Fitz Harding built at Bristol did not wholly perish when the church was rebuilt in the fourteenth century. Here and there the original work survives in

the present cathedral. In many of our parish churches, too, as in the very interesting church at Elkstone, or at Bishops Cleeve, or Swindon, or Brockworth, or Chedworth, or scores of other places, a large part of the fabric is

Chancel of Elkstone Church

purely Norman. The massy piers and firm strong arches have in them something of the strength and unchangeableness of the great forms of Nature. Built as for all time, they span for our imaginations the gulf of wellnigh a thousand years.

CHAPTER XIX

HENRY II AND HIS SONS

The accession of Henry II put an end to the terrible disorder and cruelty by which the land had been scourged during the reign of Stephen. The new king had many personal faults, but he was a great and wise king, a lover of justice, a friend of learning, a man of almost boundless activity. He was strengthened for the task of restoring order in England by his vast possessions on the Continent.

The troubles of Stephen's time, apart from the warfare of the two rivals for the throne, had arisen from the fact that the barons had been allowed to build and garrison strong castles within which they set the law at defiance. King Henry levelled some of these to the ground. He insisted that in others a royal garrison should be maintained in order to prevent rebellion against the king, and also to prevent the owner of the castle from breaking the king's laws. Many of the barons chafed under these limitations of their power. Earl William of Gloucester, who had succeeded his father Robert, expelled, for a time, the royal garrison from Bristol Castle, and held the fortress on his own account. Other barons were even more rebellious. But the king rapidly crushed resistance and Earl William was wise enough to re-admit the king's soldiers.

Robert Fitz Harding, the son of Harding, as the name implies, and the grandson of Eadnoth, profited greatly by Henry's accession. He had been reeve of Bristol and a staunch supporter of Robert, Earl of Gloucester. On account of his office and also because of the great wealth he possessed, his help must have been very valuable to the earl. Henry rewarded Fitz Harding's services to the cause of his mother and himself by the gift of the lordship of Berkeley, which was taken from the Norman lord, Roger of Berkeley, who had supported the claims of King Stephen. Later on, however, a marriage between the son of Fitz Harding and the daughter of Roger de Berkeley united the two houses. Hence their descendants, who

possess Berkeley Castle to this day, derive their descent both from the Saxon house of Fitz Harding and the Norman family of Berkeley. Berkeley Castle played a part of high importance in English history. The circular keep, with round turrets, dates from the time of Henry II and is the most ancient of the main buildings. So important was the stronghold in former days that for centuries it was one of the two English castles, mere possession of which constituted a claim to a seat in the House of Lords. It is one of the few baronial castles still inhabited. Drayton, in Elizabeth's time, described it as

> Famous as the seat of barons bold,
> And valiant earls, whose great exploits are told
> And blazon'd forth by ever busy Fame,
> As having long time borne a mighty name.

Henry spent a great part of his life in travelling to and fro throughout his wide dominions to preserve order and to see that justice was done. Moreover, he sent out his judges throughout the country at fixed times to try cases and do justice to all, and made many improvements in the administration of the laws.

He strove also to bring the Church within the scope of the ordinary law. The clergy had acquired the privilege of being tried in their own courts and not in the king's court of justice like laymen. Now the Church could not inflict the penalty of death on any one, still less on churchmen, and hence a criminal who could prove that he belonged to one of the numerous orders of the clergy, escaped capital punishment even if he were guilty of murder. Henry's desire to reform this abuse led to a long conflict with the Church. At a court held by the king at Gloucester, a number of the bishops agreed to support the king in his object. Thomas à Becket, however, whom the king had made Archbishop of Canterbury, after some hesitation, resolutely opposed Henry's wishes. A long and bitter quarrel ensued, and at length Henry, in one of the fits of violent passion to which he was subject, upbraided his followers with cowardice in not ridding him of the turbulent priest. Four knights of his court there-

upon made their way to Canterbury, and there murdered the archbishop in his own cathedral. One of the misguided servants of Henry was a Gloucestershire knight, Sir William de Tracy. According to some accounts Tracy struck the first blow at the archbishop, and then laid hands upon Becket with the intention of dragging him outside the church. Becket, a man of great strength and stature, hurled Tracy from him so violently that the knight fell upon the pavement of the church. Recovering himself, Tracy dealt the archbishop two blows with his sword; the second so sore that it clove the archbishop's head, and Becket fell dying to the ground.

The cause of the Church triumphed in the death of her champion. Becket was looked upon as a saint and martyr. Not only was Henry obliged to put aside his plans for reform, but, king though he was, had to do penance at the tomb of Becket, and even submit to be scourged. The actual murderers of the archbishop were excommunicated and, later, sent on crusade. Tracy, however, never reached the Holy Land. He was seized, we are told, with a horrible disease in Sicily, from which he suffered such pain that he could not forbear from tearing away his flesh with his own hands, and so died in agony.

The wide lordships of King Henry II were further increased by an enterprise which was of especial importance to Bristol. Dermot, King of Leinster, had been driven from his Irish kingdom and landed at Bristol on his way to seek the assistance of the English king. Henry gave him permission to raise a force in England. The Irish prince then returned to Bristol and was met there by Richard Fitz Gilbert, surnamed Strongbow, who held the strong castle of Chepstow. Accompanied by other knights and adventurers, mainly drawn from the Norman military settlements in South Wales, Strongbow invaded Ireland. The adventurers took the towns of Wexford, Waterford, and Dublin, and met with such success that King Henry foresaw the possibility of the establishment of a separate Norman kingdom in Ireland. He therefore crossed over to Dublin and received the homage of his vassals. There was, however, no real conquest of Ireland,

and the authority of the English only extended over a small district.

Of all English towns Bristol profited most by these events. The king granted Dublin to the people of Bristol 'with all the liberties and free customs which they have at Bristow and through my whole land'. Probably this grant was a reward for help which Bristol had given to the expeditions. It led to a settlement of English in Dublin and still further increased the connexion, which was already commercially important, between that town and Bristol. A list of the names of English colonists in Dublin, probably drawn up not long after King Henry's grant, still exists. Many of them no doubt came from our county, indeed a number of the names in the list are, 'of Bristol,' 'of Gloucester,' and other places to the west.

After the death of Henry II the connexion between the two towns was further increased by the fact that his son John was not only Lord of Ireland but also Earl of Gloucester, and therefore Lord of Bristol. The great estates of the earldom of Gloucester were obtained by John through his marriage with Hawisia, the daughter and heiress of Earl William.

King Richard, who succeeded his father, Henry, upon the throne, lives in our literature as one of the great heroes of romance. But, in truth, Richard, though not without some noble and even splendid qualities, was a bad king. He squandered the wealth of his kingdom upon the crusade, and, neglecting the immediate duties of his position, left England to be misgoverned and plundered while he was absent.

Some places, however, derived an advantage from the king's need of money for the purposes of the crusade. As the trading towns grew in importance they became anxious to obtain powers of self-government and various trading privileges. These it was within the power of the king to grant, and the charter by which he conferred them was frequently purchased by services rendered to him or by money payments. Moreover, the rise in wealth and influence of the trading classes made it important for the king to enlist the towns upon his side to aid him, if need

were, against the power of the great barons. Both Gloucester and Bristol had received charters from Henry II, probably as rewards for the aid they had given to his mother's cause in the time of King Stephen. Richard enlarged the privileges which his father had granted to Gloucester, and as a result its Guild of Merchants for a long time took a large part in the government of the town. During Richard's reign his brother John, as Lord of Bristol, granted the town a charter which gave it great trading advantages and released its inhabitants from many of the hardships of feudal rule. The charter also provided that the townsmen might have all their reasonable guilds.

These guilds were of great importance in the towns of the Middle Ages. Many of them were connected with the different trades and crafts. The trade guild was an association of men engaged in the same occupation and regulated all matters connected with its trade. Indeed no person was allowed to carry on a craft unless he were a member of the guild, to which he was admitted only after serving an apprenticeship. Even when he became a master himself, his business was still largely under the control of the guild, which fixed prices, insisted on a certain standard of quality, and indeed controlled the trade in all things. The guild, moreover, was a religious, a social, and a benevolent institution. It frequently had its private chapel in one of the churches of the town, its hall for trade meetings and for social gatherings, and it often assisted its less fortunate members or their dependants. In Bristol, which, during Plantagenet times, was with the single exception of London the greatest commercial town in England, the guilds were numerous and powerful. Apart from guilds which were wholly or mainly religious and charitable in character, there were at least twenty-six guilds in the town connected with trades. The most important was the Weavers' Guild, and among the others were the Guilds of the Tuckers or Fullers, the Cornesers or Corndealers, the Butchers, the Cutlers, and the Tailors.

The charters of Gloucester and Bristol and the guilds of the towns therefore bring before us the spectacle of the

towns gradually throwing off the power of their feudal lords and gaining considerable powers of orderly self-government. But while Gloucester and Bristol gained during Richard's reign, another town in the county lost. The lordship of Cirencester was sold by the king to the abbot of the great monastery which Henry I had founded in the town. The townsfolk in after times had cause to complain of the harsh government of their lord, the abbot, and no doubt felt their lot all the harder in comparison with the measure of freedom enjoyed by their neighbours of Bristol and Gloucester.

John was amply repaid by Bristol for the privileges he had granted to it. While his brother was absent on the crusade the faithless Prince John was plotting to gain the crown and seems to have been supported by the town of Bristol. On the death of Richard, from an arrow-wound received in France, John became king, to leave a name ever infamous in history for cruelty, vice, and misrule. He divorced Hawisia of Gloucester in order to make a more splendid match. But, though he gave up the other lands of the earldom of Gloucester to the second husband whom Hawisia married, he retained the castle and lordship of Bristol. The town, mindful no doubt of the favours it had received, remained faithful to him during the wars which his vices and misgovernment brought upon the land.

CHAPTER XX

KING AND BARONS

The reign of King John was a time of such disaster abroad and of such cruelty and injustice at home that nearly all those Englishmen who had any sense of justice and love for their native land rose against his rule. John lost the English provinces in France, he involved his

kingdom in a quarrel with the Pope which for years deprived his subjects of the services of the Church, he and his servants ruled with the greatest harshness and tyranny. In Gloucestershire, for example, the French sheriffs whom he appointed acted with gross injustice. So great was the hatred aroused by their tyranny that the sheriff who was living in 1215 and the relatives of his predecessor were expressly outlawed by the Great Charter.

The evil king was often in our county, sometimes at Gloucester, frequently at his strong castle of Bristol. It was at the latter town that he gave one of the most striking instances of his injustice and cruelty. For some time, probably since the Norman Conquest, the Jews had been allowed to settle in England. They were a despised and persecuted race who, however, often became rich by lending money at interest, a pursuit in which Christians were not allowed to engage. Their wealth invited attack from the unscrupulous king. He gave orders that all the Jews throughout the country should be seized and kept in dungeons until they ransomed themselves. From one old Jew of Bristol he demanded the great sum of 10,000 marks. The old man refused to find the money and, though he was tortured in the dungeons of the castle, steadfastly held to his refusal. A new kind of torture was then tried. By the king's orders one of the Jew's teeth was hammered out every day until, worn out by the pain, the wretched man procured the money for his ransom.

The crimes and misgovernment of the king at length led to a great rising of the barons. Almost entirely deserted by his followers, John was forced in 1215 to sign the Great Charter. In order to bind, if possible, the faithless king to keep his word a number of barons were appointed as guardians of the charter. Among them was the Earl of Gloucester, the first of the earls of our county of the great family of De Clare, which for a century played a great part in the history of our country. His son, who, like his father, was named Gilbert De Clare, was also among the guardians of the charter. Lord Robert of Berkeley was another great Gloucestershire baron who

took an active part in opposition to the king. On the whole, however, our county did not take a large share in obtaining the Great Charter. The chief strength of the barons lay in the east and north of England, while the king was strongest in the west.

The faithless monarch had no intention of keeping his plighted word with regard to the Charter longer than he was obliged. Raising an army of hired foreign soldiers, he attacked the lands held by the barons opposed to him and plundered their lands and castles. In their extremity the barons sought the aid of Louis, son of the King of France, to whom they promised the throne as the price of his support. Louis met with so much success that John was forced to retreat for a time into Gloucestershire. Before very long, however, the sudden death of the king released the land from his tyranny and cruelty.

The death of John completely altered the aspect of affairs. His son Henry was a lad of but nine years, and there was, therefore, reason to hope that the evils of the time of King John had ended with the life of the author of them. Moreover, though the barons, when affairs seemed desperate, had been willing to promise the crown to Louis, many of them had no wish to see a French prince on the throne now that there was a reasonable hope of good government under the rightful king. Indeed, the events of the reigns of John and of his son Henry III show that a national spirit had grown up among the Norman barons. Their main interests were now bound up with England ; they were no longer merely a conquering garrison in a foreign country, and they bitterly resented the giving to foreigners, such as John's hated sheriffs in Gloucestershire, of offices of profit and power in the country.

Some of the barons, however, remained faithful to their pledge to Louis. Their army held a great part of England and it was therefore necessary for the supporters of the young Henry to carry out his coronation in some place devoted to the royal cause. Hence the prince was crowned in the first instance in the abbey at Gloucester. As the royal crown could not be obtained

the boy king was crowned with a plain circlet of gold. Before the high altar of the church he swore on the gospels and holy relics to rule his people according to the laws.

The rule of the kingdom during the king's boyhood fell upon his chief supporters. They conducted affairs vigorously and wisely. The claims of Prince Louis of France were crushed at the battle of Lincoln where, among other barons who supported him, Earl Gilbert of Gloucester was taken prisoner. Order was restored and the law, which had been badly administered during the troubles of John's reign, was once more enforced. The judges were sent out upon assize, and two sets of notes exist of the proceedings before King Henry's judges who sat at Gloucester in 1221. There were over five hundred cases to be tried, and of these well over three hundred were charges of causing death. Apart from the cases which would now be classed as manslaughter about a half of the whole were probably cases of murder. So terrible a list furnishes grim evidence of the weakness of the law in those violent days. It is, however, to be noticed that the assize of 1221 was the first which had been held in Gloucester for some seven years or more.

When Henry himself undertook the rule of his country he proved himself a weak and foolish king. The crown had been rendered comparatively poor by the extravagance of Richard and John. Nevertheless Henry squandered money in foolish and useless expeditions abroad and by improvident management at home. The resentment of the English barons was especially awakened by the king's partiality for foreigners. Great numbers of Frenchmen, many of whom were the relatives and compatriots of Henry's French mother and his French wife, came to England. They were given offices of high rank and profit and estates and wealth which the impoverished country could ill afford. It is small wonder that discontent was rife among the English barons. Over and over again some of them resisted the king, and Henry was several times at Gloucester in connexion with these troubles.

The barons, however, lacked a leader of outstanding ability until the great Earl of Leicester, Simon de Montfort, put himself in the forefront of their cause. Second only to him in ability and influence was the young Earl of Gloucester, Gilbert de Clare, the second of the name, and generally distinguished as the ' Red Earl '.

While the quarrel between the king and the barons was becoming more and more bitter, an event took place at Gloucester which shows how keenly the appointment of French officials was resented in the county. King Henry made a French knight Constable of Gloucester and Sheriff of the county. Thereupon the barons of the neighbourhood held a meeting and determined to set the king's order at defiance. They chose one of their number, Sir William Tracy, as sheriff, and though the king's nominee was in possession of the castle, Sir William proceeded to hold his court in the town. His rival, however, burst out of his fortress with a band of soldiers, stormed into the court of the barons' sheriff, dragged him from his judgement-seat, and hurrying him through the streets shut him up as a prisoner in the castle.

Thereupon two of the Gloucestershire barons, Sir John Giffard, Lord of Brimpsfield, and Sir Roger de Clifford, laid siege to the castle. The French knight defended his charge with great courage and resolution. One of the prisoners who were shut up in the castle found means, however, to open a postern in the outer defences. The besiegers swarmed in and the garrison fled to the strongest tower of the castle as their last defence. Its shelter, however, did not avail them. The strong door was battered down with hammers and axes, the assailants poured in, and the castle was in the hands of the national party.

It appears, however, to have been entrusted to the charge of Sir Roger de Clifford, who proved faithless to the cause. He handed it over to the king, and in reward was made constable of the castle and sheriff of the county, offices which were probably the bribe which proved too great for his attachment to the barons' cause. Moreover, Clifford established the royal authority over the

city as well as over the castle, and the town walls were manned by his garrison.

No doubt Sir John Giffard in his castle at Brimpsfield, only a short distance from the edge of the Cotswolds overlooking Gloucester, chafed at the treachery of his old ally. Giffard was a bold and resolute man, the representative of a family which had been settled at Brimpsfield, or Bromsfield as it was formerly called, since the Norman Conquest. His daring character is shown by the fact that he carried off against her will a great lady whom he wished to marry and forcibly made her his wife. Probably it was largely through Giffard's influence that Earl Gilbert de Clare took up the national cause.

Giffard did not long allow his former friend to remain quietly in possession of the town and castle of Gloucester. One day two Welsh wool merchants rode up to the west gate of the city. Like others of their trade who frequented the great wool market of the town, they were clad in long gowns reaching from neck to heel, and woolpacks were strapped across the backs of their horses. The warder was, doubtless, well accustomed to such traders and admitted them without question. Once inside the gate, however, the supposed merchants threw off their long cloaks and revealed themselves to the astonished guardians of the gate as two knights in complete armour. They were Sir John Giffard and another Gloucestershire gentleman, Sir John de Baalun. Dumbfounded by the sudden transformation the warder gave up his keys. The gate was then thrown wide open and Sir John Giffard's followers, who had been lying in ambush outside the wall, poured through it and captured the town. But though the town was now in the hands of the barons the castle still held out for the king.

The position of affairs was so critical that Prince Edward, the eldest son of King Henry III, hastened from Oxford with a body of soldiers to attempt the recapture of the city. Thus the barons' soldiers within the town were assailed at the same time by the soldiers of Prince Edward, lying outside the town, and by the royalist garrison sallying from the castle. Nevertheless they kept their hold upon the place.

In this position of affairs Prince Edward managed to cross the Severn in a boat belonging to the Abbot of Tewkesbury, to make his way secretly into the castle and to announce his presence by unfurling his flag on the topmost turret. The event of the struggle was, however, so uncertain that the prince was ready to treat with the barons. He left the castle unarmed, and, in an interview, it was arranged that his opponents should withdraw from the town, while, on the other hand, the prince undertook that his father should grant the demands of the barons and should put an end to the war. Once rid of his enemies, however, Prince Edward does not seem to have acted with the justice which generally distinguished him when in later days he became king. Apparently the burgesses of Gloucester had favoured his opponents. In revenge the prince allowed his troops to pillage the place, and some of the chief townsmen were thrown into prison.

In 1264 the barons won a great victory over the king's forces at Lewes. As a result both King Henry and his son Edward fell into the hands of the baronial party. The centre of the army of the barons at Lewes was commanded by Gilbert de Clare, and it was to him that the king surrendered his sword. Simon de Montfort was now for a time supreme in the land. The period of his power is rendered for ever memorable from the fact that to his parliament of 1265 he summoned not only the bishops and mitred abbots, the great barons and knights of the shire as in earlier years, but also representatives of the chief cities and boroughs. Thus Sir Simon's parliament of 1265 for the first time recognized the justice of some representation of the commons in the parliament of the nation.

But the position of De Montfort was a very insecure one. The Mortimers and other lords of the Welsh marches were devoted to the cause of King Henry. A still more serious danger to Earl Simon arose from the fact that the young Earl of Gloucester, who had almost equalled De Montfort in power and authority, began to show signs of discontent. He complained that his ally took too great

a part of the government upon himself, and that he misused his position in order to enrich his friends. Thus a coolness arose between the two earls which broke out into an open quarrel over a subject comparatively trivial in itself. The warlike De Clares were great lovers of the tournament and all martial exercises. Hence, when De Montfort forbad a tournament in which some of the De Clares were to take part, the proud young earl bitterly resented his action. He fled from London to Gloucester, rallied round him his own forces and those of his brother, the governor of St. Briavels Castle, and allied himself with the Mortimers on behalf of the king. Thereupon De Montfort, with the captive king in his train, marched upon Gloucester, and the Red Earl retreated into the Forest of Dean. A hollow truce between Simon de Montfort and the Earl of Gloucester was patched up, and Simon passed on into South Wales.

But no real peace had been made between the earls. Events moved rapidly. Prince Edward, as strong and able as his father was weak and foolish, escaped from his captivity. He fled to a strong castle on the Welsh marches belonging to the Mortimers, allied himself with Earl Gilbert, and was joined by other great nobles and also by lesser lords such as the bold Sir John Giffard, who, like Gilbert de Clare, had gone over to the royal cause. Worcester was taken and, after a gallant defence by De Montfort's garrison, Gloucester Castle surrendered to the prince.

De Montfort was now in a very perilous position. The capture of Gloucester gave Prince Edward the command of the road between South Wales, where De Montfort lay, and the rest of England. Its possession, as in other cases in our history, was of vital importance. The army of the prince held the line of the Severn and cut off Earl Simon from the parts of England where his strength lay. The bridges over the Severn and the Wye were broken down and the fords strongly held. The leader of the barons was trapped. One hope remained to him. Bristol was devoted to his cause, and from Newport, at the mouth of the Usk, De Montfort sent urgent messages

begging the citizens to send him all the transport vessels they could muster. Could he but escape to Bristol, he might yet join his forces in eastern England and restore his fortunes. The townsfolk of Bristol responded to his appeal. They sent their ships and the embarkation began. But while it was going on they were attacked by a war-galley belonging to Earl Gilbert. A number of the Bristol ships were sunk, and Simon's plan of escape was wrecked.

Hence, De Montfort had to march far northwards with a weary and dispirited force in order to cross the Severn high up in its course. Not far beyond the borders of our county, in the angle between Severn and Avon, the great earl fell on the field of Evesham. The second division of Prince Edward's army at Evesham fight was led by the Earl of Gloucester, and it was his attack which decided the issue of the battle. But though the body of the great Earl of Leicester was mangled in the pleasant meadows by Avon side his work survived. Prince Edward who, as the first prince of the blood royal, had naturally espoused his father's cause, was as wise in council as he had already proved himself able in warfare. Upon him the conduct of the affairs of the nation during the later years of the reign of Henry III largely fell. So well were they conducted, and so great a measure of order and good government was restored to the distracted country, that before his father's death Prince Edward was able to leave England to take part in the last of the crusades.

CHAPTER XXI

EARLY ENGLISH BUILDINGS

During the thirteenth century a new style of building, destined to develop into one of the chief glories of English art, the Gothic architecture of our land, began. The new style is of especial interest to us because, unlike the Norman, it is the product of our own land, truly English

in origin, while Norman methods of building were, as we have seen, outgrowths of the Roman style.

The new style of building was lighter and more graceful than the Norman. In place of the massive piers of the earlier style comparatively slender graceful columns, sometimes of several shafts, arose to carry the arches. These arches were no longer circular but pointed, and such arches continued to be the distinguishing feature of the buildings throughout the great periods of our native architecture. Hence the style itself is often called the Pointed style. The first stage, lasting from the later part of the twelfth down to about the end of the thirteenth century, is called the Early Pointed. Very frequently work of the Early Pointed period in England is known as Early English work.

The name Gothic architecture is frequently applied to the Pointed style of building. The name is appropriate in that the style was the invention of the descendants of those barbarous races, the English and kindred peoples, who were known as Goths. Originally, however, the name was given in the eighteenth century as a term of reproach to signify a barbarous style of building. By that time creative genius in architecture in our country had died out. A slavish imitation of Greek and Roman models had taken the place of the old native styles, and the triumphs of the art of the Middle Ages were decried as barbarous because they lacked the regularity and uniformity of the buildings of classical times. Few nowadays, however, would hesitate to rank the great English Gothic buildings of the Middle Ages among the chief glories of the art of our land.

The slender graceful columns of the Early English style are generally surmounted by bell-shaped caps often decorated with curling leaves cut in the stone. The carving of these leaves and of the deep groves or mouldings cut to relieve plain surfaces of stone show a great advance upon Norman work. The improvement in the carving is largely due to the fact that the craftsmen of the Early Pointed period had learnt to use the chisel and mallet for their work, while the earlier Norman builders had cut out their decorations with the axe.

St. Mary's Church, Cheltenham

The Early English craftsmen delighted in adorning the mouldings in their work with an ornamental carved pattern known as dog-tooth ornament. A typical form of this ornament is illustrated here and, in this or in similar forms, is found in much Early Pointed work.

The windows of this period are very characteristic. They are long, narrow, and sharply pointed, resembling a surgeon's lancet in shape, and are therefore called lancet windows. At first they were generally placed singly, but, about the middle of the thirteenth century, it became usual to group two or more lancet windows together under a single arch. The wall above the lancets and below the arch was then pierced to make another small, and generally rounded, window. The pattern made by piercing the wall above the grouped windows is called plate tracery. It marks the beginning of the window tracery, which forms such a striking and beautiful feature of later Gothic art. The development is well seen in the lower windows of the tower from which springs the spire of the parish church of St. Mary, Cheltenham. The windows of the lowest stage are lancets, while in the stage above, which is somewhat later in date of building, plate tracery is introduced. Partly because so many churches had been built during the Norman times there are few churches in our county which are wholly, or indeed mainly, in the Early English style. Where, however, alterations or additions were made in existing churches the new style of construction was adopted, and consequently a large number of churches contain more or less Early English work.

Dog-tooth Ornament

CHAPTER XXII

THE FIRST EDWARD

Prince Edward, 'the last of the Crusaders,' was still absent from the kingdom when his father died. Nevertheless he succeeded quietly to the throne.

One of the guardians of the kingdom during the king's absence abroad was the Earl of Gloucester. Under Edward I, as under Henry III, this great nobleman was the foremost subject of the crown. He held vast estates, not only in Gloucestershire, but also in twenty-one other English counties, and was also lord of broad lands in Wales and Ireland. He was, says an old chronicler, 'prudent in council, strenuous in war, very bold in defending his rights.' This boldness in defending his rights even carried him to the length of waging private war with the Earl of Norfolk about possessions in Wales. By so doing he rightly incurred the king's displeasure. Edward set himself sternly against such an abuse of power.

The 'Red Earl' was in the main, however, a faithful servant of Edward. Indeed, he became the king's son-in-law by marrying as his second wife the Princess Joan. From the king he held as his hunting ground the great Chase of Malvern, which stretched from the Malvern Hills into Gloucestershire. To this day a trench which separated the lands of Earl Gilbert from those of the Bishop of Hereford, is known as the 'Red Earl's Ditch'.

The great king allowed no subject to set himself up above the laws. The excessive power of the barons over the people who dwelt upon their lands, their right to try them in their courts, and even to hang them, was evidently bound to lead to gross abuses and the gravest injustice. Under a cruel and unjust lord, a man's property and liberty, indeed his life itself, was never safe. The justice of the king's courts was far less likely to be corrupt and prejudiced. Hence a king who secured an equal administration of justice to his subjects as did Edward I conferred

an invaluable benefit upon his people. The nobles chafed under some of the king's enactments, such as the Statutes of Gloucester, which threatened their real or fancied rights. But in the main the king was strong enough to enforce his will.

Edward was, moreover, a great law-maker. So deep a mark did he leave upon the laws of the land that he is generally considered to be, in this respect, the greatest king who ever sat upon the throne of England. Further, he established as a settled part of our government, the plan of his great antagonist, Simon de Montfort, of summoning representatives of the cities and boroughs to the Parliament of the nation. Moreover, he was the greatest warrior of his time and country. He formed, or events gradually shaped for him, the plan of uniting the whole island of Great Britain under his sole sovereignty. It is impossible to defend all the means he took to attain this end. Nevertheless the project, could it have been accomplished, would undoubtedly have been to the advantage of the whole island.

The great plan of Edward I was only partly successful. Wales indeed was reduced. In the operations against the Welsh, the king and his commanders were several times at Gloucester, and Gloucestershire nobles, led by Earl Gilbert, were prominent in the wars. One of the knights in command when Llewellyn, the last native Prince of Wales, was killed, was Sir John Giffard, the bold captor of Gloucester in the Barons' Wars. Giffard, indeed, a man who in many respects was a type of the barons of the later Middle Ages, served in all the wars of Edward I. It is interesting to note another side of his character in the fact that he founded Gloucester Hall, at Oxford, which afterwards became Worcester College.

The conquest of Scotland presented greater difficulties than that of Wales. True, so long as the great king lived his warlike abilities triumphed. Scotland for a time was apparently crushed, and her castles and strong places were filled with English garrisons. In these operations our county, remote from the Scottish border, was only concerned in common with the rest of England. The

nobles and knights of Gloucestershire, as of other counties, of course, led their followers in the ranks of the king's armies. The archers and miners of the Forest of Dean seem, however, to have been especially largely drawn upon for the wars of the three Edwards. The forest archers were esteemed for their prowess with the long bow, while the occupation of the miners gave them a skill especially useful in siege operations. The conquest of Scotland was only temporary. Towards the end of the reign of Edward, King Robert Bruce was crowned King of Scotland. But he had no very great measure of support, and his prospects of establishing himself as king in face of the English power seemed poor. Nevertheless, King Edward, though now advanced in years and stricken with illness, prepared to put down the rising. He died, however, when he had almost reached the Scottish border.

CHAPTER XXIII

'THE SHRIEKS OF DEATH'

The designs of Edward I were too difficult to be carried out by his slothful and self-indulgent son. Handsome in person and accomplished in manners, the second Edward altogether lacked the stern virtues and strict sense of duty of his great father. The tried soldiers and statesmen, who had served his father, found themselves set aside for favourites whose only merit lay in their skill in ministering to the king's love of pleasure and amusement. Hence disaster abroad and disorder at home ensued, and a shameful reign ended in the shameful death of the king.

King Robert of Scotland was not slow to avail himself of the sloth and folly of Edward II. One by one the garrisons of the English in Scotland were reduced, until it became evident that nothing but a desperate effort could retrieve the fortunes of the English cause. The

threatened fall of Stirling Castle, the last stronghold left to England, at length stirred Edward to action, and with a great army he invaded Scotland in 1314. With the king marched his kinsman, Gilbert de Clare III, the son of the Red Earl of Gloucester and the Princess Joan. The young earl, who was born at Tewkesbury in 1291, led five hundred of his retainers at his own expense upon the expedition. With the English army there marched also Thomas, Lord Berkeley, and his two sons, Thomas and Maurice, with their men-at-arms and archers from the Vale of Berkeley and the Forest of Dean.

On a day in midsummer the great English host came upon the Scottish army, skilfully drawn up by Robert Bruce. The Earl of Gloucester, wise beyond his years, advised his royal kinsman to delay the attack until the following day in order that the battle might be set in array and the English soldiers rested. The king's reply was to taunt the earl with cowardice. Stung by the insult, Gloucester declared that his conduct in the battle should disprove the charge. As leader of the van of the English army, he received the king's commands to begin the battle :—

> 'Bid Gloster's Earl the fight begin.'
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Earl Gilbert waved his truncheon high
> Signal for England's archery
> To halt and bend their bows.

writes Sir Walter Scott in *The Lord of the Isles*.

Bruce, however, prevented the full effect of the flight of English arrows, which won so many fights in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Edward had left his archers exposed to the attack of the Scottish cavalry. A sudden onset of the mail-clad horsemen bore down the bowmen ; they were ridden over and scattered.

But the chivalry of England fought desperately. Many fell into the pits which Bruce had caused to be dug in front of his position, and were unhorsed and crushed under foot. Still

Too strong in courage and in might
Was England yet, to yield the fight,
Her noblest all are here;
There Gloster plied the bloody sword,
And Berkley, Grey, and Hereford.

Right truly did the young Earl of Gloucester sustain his answer to the king's taunt. One chronicler says that the weight of the whole combat rested upon him. He fought 'like a wild boar, making his sword drunk with blood'. At length his horse stumbled and the earl fell from his saddle; he was trampled under the hoofs of the horses, his body was pierced with many spear thrusts, his head battered to pieces. So fell the last and perhaps the noblest of the De Clares.

Thomas, Lord Berkeley, and one of his sons were among the many prisoners who fell into the hands of the Scots. The other son, Maurice, managed to escape from the battle, and succeeded in raising the heavy ransom demanded for his father and brother.

Bruce, with the generosity of a gallant enemy, sent back the body of the young Earl of Gloucester without ransom. His remains, like those of his father and of so many of the Lords of the town, from Fitz Hamon onwards, were laid to rest in the great Abbey of Tewkesbury. When his grave was uncovered at the restoration of the abbey in the nineteenth century, the bones of a tall and powerful man were disclosed. Well it would have been for the fame of De Clare's kinsman, the king, had he too fallen on the disastrous field. Edward, however, escaped, still to afflict his country for some years with his misrule.

The favourites of the later years of Edward's reign were the two Despensers, father and son. They were, unlike his former favourite Gaveston, great English nobles. Indeed the family of the Despensers was for many years among the greatest in Gloucestershire. To them, by marriage, passed a great part of the vast estates of the De Clares, and the younger Despenser was, later on, made Earl of Gloucester by the king.

Despite their rank, the Despensers were hated as

favourites of the king, and were held to be responsible for the evil government of the land. Hence a strong party of the barons, including most of the nobles of our county, who had, in a special degree, experienced the overbearing arrogance of the Despensers, banded themselves together against the king and his favourites. So strong was the feeling against them that Edward found himself unsafe in the city when he visited Gloucester, and withdrew to Bristol Castle.

Under the leadership of the king's kinsman, Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, the barons demanded the banishment of the Despensers. The king was obliged to bow to the storm and his friends were driven from the country.

Shortly afterwards, however, Edward felt strong enough to take action against his enemies. He advanced into Gloucestershire and marched along the old Roman Road from Cirencester to Gloucester in order to occupy the city, intending to advance thence against his enemies in the Welsh marches. His course brought him almost within bowshot of the castle of the Giffards at Brimpsfield near the brow of the hills overlooking Gloucester. When Edward drew near the steep declivity, whence one may look almost straight down from the Cotswolds into the city some six miles away, he learnt that the town was held by Sir John Giffard, son of the stout fighter of the times of Henry III and Edward I. The king, therefore, passed northwards along the ridgeway of the hills. Some part of his baggage was pillaged by Giffard's soldiers near the present village of Birdlip. Probably they made a sudden sally upon a straggling part of the king's array from their castle at Brimpsfield hard by.

Edward had to continue his march far beyond the confines of our county before he succeeded in crossing the Severn. Then, however, fortune for a time favoured him. He returned to Gloucester and captured the town, and not long after the army of the barons was defeated at Boroughbridge in Yorkshire. The Earl of Lancaster was captured and executed, and among other prisoners were Sir John Giffard and Lord Berkeley. Giffard was terribly punished for his recent affront to the king. He was

brought to the town of Gloucester, where he and his father had engaged in so many desperate enterprises, and condemned to death as a traitor. Dragged on a hurdle outside the city walls, he was hung on high from the gallows. His quivering body was cut down, quartered, and the parts were stuck upon spikes at the city gates as a warning to others. His castle at Brimpsfield was destroyed. To-day, one looks down from the pleasant churchyard hard by, upon the dried-up moat and a mound of earth and stones thickly overgrown with bushes and brambles. These are all the remains of the castle of the Giffards, who held their lands at Brimpsfield for some two and a half centuries from the time of the Norman Conquest, and, as lesser barons, played no small part in the affairs of their times.

Lord Berkeley escaped more lightly than Sir John Giffard. He was, however, shut up in Wallingford Castle as a prisoner, and died there a few years later.

The triumph of Edward was now complete. Had he been wise he might have reigned in peace for the rest of his life. His folly, however, remained with him and lured him to his doom. As soon as fortune began to smile upon him he recalled the Despensers. The father he made Earl of Winchester, and the son was loaded with honours. He was created Earl of Gloucester, and the king made the great house of Berkeley his mortal foes by bestowing the Castle of Berkeley and the manors of its lord upon the favourite. Moreover, he was made governor of Bristol Castle, so that the control of the greater part of our county passed into his hands. Nevertheless a few years of comparative tranquillity passed, though discontent was rife, not only among the barons but also in the trading towns, such as Bristol, and among the commons generally.

The universal hatred of the Despensers was shared also by Edward's queen, Isabella of France. This princess, who at the time of her marriage was said to be the most beautiful woman in Europe, was the final instrument of her husband's downfall. In 1325 she went over to France on the pretence of settling a dispute between her husband, King Edward, and her brother, the King of

France. There she allied herself with Roger Mortimer, one of the lords who had opposed her husband and who had succeeded in escaping from captivity in the Tower.

Isabella and Mortimer determined to attempt the overthrow of the Despensers. They landed in Suffolk and were soon joined by the opponents of the court.

In his extremity Edward found himself almost deserted. From London he, with the younger Despenser, fled to Gloucester, where he tried to rally forces for his defence. He failed and, continuing his flight, took refuge in Neath Abbey in South Wales. Thence he tried to escape to Lundy Island, but was driven back by contrary winds which prevented his landing.

Meanwhile the queen had marched by way of Oxford and the Cotswolds, hard upon the heels of the fugitive king, as far as Gloucester. She entered the town only a few days after Edward had fled across the Severn, and there she was joined by an army from the north of England and by the lords of the Welsh marches. With her increased forces, and welcomed everywhere as a deliverer, she marched southward along the Severn Valley. Her object was to reduce Bristol, which was held by the elder Despenser. On her way she halted at Berkeley Castle, which she restored to its rightful owner, Lord Thomas, heir of the lord who had died a prisoner at Wallingford. Proceeding, she laid siege to Bristol Castle.

The townsmen seem to have been heart and soul in her cause, and it appears to have been largely due to them that Despenser was forced to surrender. Moreover, they clamoured for his execution. He was dragged outside the town, put to death as a traitor, and his body cast to the dogs. On the same day the young Prince Edward was chosen as guardian of the kingdom by the bishops and lords of the queen's party assembled at Bristol.

Very shortly afterwards the king and the younger Despenser were captured in South Wales. The hated favourite was hanged on a lofty gibbet at Hereford and his body hacked in pieces. His remains were afterwards collected and entombed in the abbey church at Tewkesbury.

Berkeley Castle

A short span of life as a captive was allowed to the wretched king, while Isabella and Mortimer ruled the kingdom behind the pretence of the guardianship of the realm, voted at Bristol to the young Prince Edward. For a time the royal prisoner was shut up in Bristol Castle. Hearing, however, of a plot formed for his release, his jailers determined to remove him to the Castle of Berkeley.

So Edward fared forth upon his last sad journey. As he rode out of Bristol Castle, his jailers and the soldiers mocked the once powerful king. They crowned him with a crown of twisted hay, and so, with many a gibe and insult, the fallen son of the great Edward I traversed his way of sorrows to the castle of the Berkeleys. There he was subjected to further indignities by his keepers, Gournay and Maltravers.

At length Isabella and Mortimer determined upon his death. One night in September 1327, 'Severn echoed with affright

> The shrieks of death thro' Berkley's roof that ring,
> Shrieks of an agonizing king.'

Edward had been seized in the night by his brutal jailers and foully murdered by the thrusting of a red-hot iron into his body. How far Lord Berkeley knew of the deed, for which Gournay and Maltravers were primarily responsible, is a matter of doubt. Lord Thomas declared that he was guiltless of the murder, and that when the horrible act was committed he was lying sick at his manor-house at Bradley. The accounts of the steward of the manor, however, throw some doubt upon this statement, as they appear to show that Lord Berkeley came to Bradley after, and not before, the murder. However, the baron was acquitted of any share in the crime by a jury of twelve knights.

Hated and despised as Edward had been, the horror of his murder awakened pity for one who had been weak and foolish rather than actively vicious and criminal. Still the monks of the neighbouring abbeys feared to give burial-place to his remains, probably lest they might incur the vengeance of the queen and Mortimer.

Abbot Thokey of Gloucester was, however, either braver or more compassionate than his brother abbots of Kingswood and Bristol. He sent his car, bearing upon it the arms of his abbey, to Berkeley, and the body of the second Edward was brought with all honour to the south gate of Gloucester. There the monks of the abbey met it and in solemn procession carried it to their church and gave it honourable burial.

Good Abbot Thokey no doubt thought that in giving the body of the tortured king shelter within God's church he was only doing a deed of Christian piety and charity. Even as such, his act is worthy of remembrance. But unwittingly he was refounding the fortunes of the church over which he ruled as Lord Abbot. The glories of the present Cathedral, dear to all who love the beauty of ancient art, are largely due to the shelter he gave to the mangled body of the king who died a death of horror where 'Berk'ley's towers appear in martial pride' above the meadows of the peaceful vale.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE BRISTOL 'GREAT INSURRECTION'

During the disastrous reign of Edward II, Bristol was for a time in a state of open rebellion. The events of this rising, known in the history of the town as the Great Insurrection, were to some extent connected with the general troubles of the kingdom. In the main, however, the rising had its origin in local causes. Nevertheless it is of general interest as showing the rise in power and influence of the trading towns, and as illustrating the struggles by which they enlarged their liberties.

Bristol was in origin purely a Gloucestershire town. It grew up, as we have seen, upon the peninsula between the Frome and the Avon, and was situated entirely on

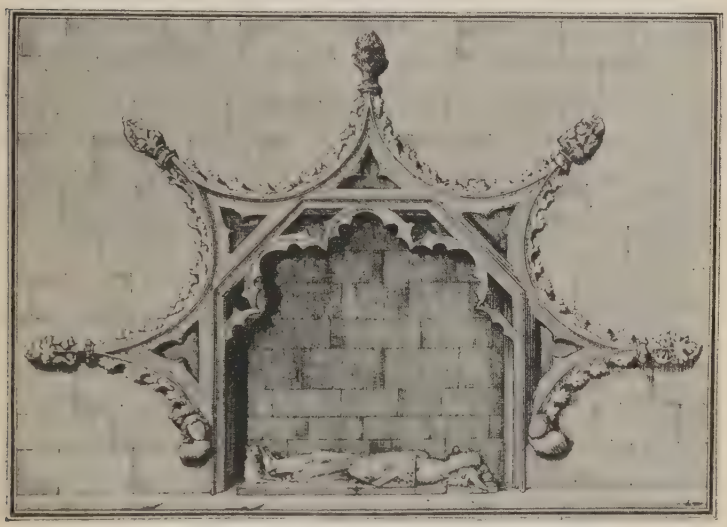
the northern, or Gloucestershire, side of the latter river. But, as the population of the town increased, its original limits became too small, and the town spread across the River Avon to the Somersetshire side. Now the vill of Redcliff, south of the Avon, which was thus settled by merchants and traders of Bristol, belonged to the Lords of Berkeley.

The rights upon which these feudal lords insisted led to frequent conflicts with the town through a long course of years. As early as the closing years of the reign of Henry II, the people dwelling in Redcliff had been held to be burgesses of Bristol. Nevertheless the Berkeleys still ruled in the vill and summoned their tenants to appear before their courts instead of before the courts of the town. Hence there arose frequent quarrels and even bloodshed between the retainers of the Berkeleys and the townsfolk. Naturally the people of Bristol bitterly resented the power claimed by the feudal lord over some of their number ; a power which extended to the hanging upon the lord's gallows of a man convicted of theft in his court. Hence, when a certain burgess was arrested by the officers of the Berkeleys early in the fourteenth century on a charge of murder, the townsfolk were deeply stirred. The mayor, according to the custom of the time, when aid was needed to protect the liberties of the town, caused the alarm bell to be sounded. As its warning note rang out, traders and craftsmen, merchants and seamen, seized their arms and poured out from shops and houses to the meeting-place at the Guildhall. The assembled crowd determined to rescue their fellow townsman. With the mayor as leader, they broke into the lord's jail and set his prisoner free.

The Berkeleys complained to the king, while on the other hand the townsfolk laid many charges against the lords of Redcliff. They complained that Lord Thomas and his men had ridden into the town and dragged men from their houses. Further, they declared that, when the womenfolk interfered, the Berkeleys had ridden them down, so that some were killed and some injured. Among other charges, too, they accused the Berkeleys of beating and illtreating the burgesses of Bristol at fairs in the

neighbourhood, and even breaking the legs of one Adam the Cheeseman. However, nothing was at this time settled as to the rights of the Berkeleys in their vill.

Meanwhile discontent was rife in Bristol with respect to the manner in which the government of the town itself was carried on. Various charters had given the burgesses considerable powers of self-government. In



Berkeley Tomb, Bristol Cathedral

practice, however, these powers in Bristol, as in many other towns of the Middle Ages, had drifted into a few hands. A kind of council of fourteen men held sway and sought to exclude the rest of the people of the town from the rights which they claimed as burgesses. The local struggle was connected with the general troubles of the reign of Edward II, for while the Fourteen favoured the king's cause the commons generally were opposed to him.

The quarrel came to a head concerning a toll which the king's constable of the castle, with the support of the

Fourteen, sought to enforce, and which the commons of Bristol flatly refused to pay.

Thereupon the king appointed commissioners, the chief of whom was Lord Thomas of Berkeley, to make an inquiry into the dispute. The men of Bristol regarded this appointment of their feudal enemy to try the case as prejudging the matter against them.

Therefore, when the judges were assembled in the Guildhall, some of the leaders rang the alarm bell. They spoke to the townsmen who assembled in response to the signal, and told them that the rights of the town were in danger, since the judges were the friends of the enemies of Bristol.

Incited by the speeches of their leaders, the townsfolk, long known as a turbulent people, attacked the Guildhall. There was a sharp fight. Some of the judges' followers within the building were injured by falling from the windows through which they sought to escape, and though the judges themselves managed to get away, some twenty men were killed in the struggle.

The king then deprived the town of its liberties, and in reply, Bristol broke out into open rebellion. The townsmen chose one of their number, named Taverner, as mayor. They built a wall across the town to shut off the castle and prepared to defend themselves not only against its garrison but against the whole force of the kingdom.

For some three years Bristol was to all intents and purposes a small republic within the kingdom. The year following the outbreak was 1314, and it was probably in its early months that young Earl Gilbert de Clare was sent to attack the town with an army of 20,000 men. The people of Bristol were not overawed by this formidable force, and resolutely refused to surrender their town. Possibly they believed that, in view of the expedition against Scotland, Earl Gilbert and his soldiers would be wanted to march across the northern border. If so, their calculations were just. The town was not actively attacked, and the Earl of Gloucester marched away to his death on the field of Bannockburn.

The king's government, torn by faction and weakened by disaster, was for some time in no position to deal with

the insurgent town. At length, however, in 1316, active measures were taken. The people of Bristol were told that if they would submit and would give up some of their leaders the king would deal mercifully with them. But the townsfolk would not admit that they were in the wrong. They told the messengers of the king's government that the strife was not of their beginning, and that they had only defended their just rights. Further, they plainly and boldly declared that they would only obey the king provided he would allow them their rights and liberties; if not, they would resist him to the death.

The Government now took measures upon a large scale to reduce the rebellious town. It was besieged by a regular army, while the ships of the Berkeleys blockaded it by water. The town for a time resisted stoutly. It was beset, however, both by land and water, while the castle hurled great stones from its engines of war into the town. Resistance became useless and the little republic was forced to submit. Beyond a fine inflicted upon the town and the banishment of Taverner and a few others, no very heavy punishment seems to have been inflicted.

Though Bristol was thus at length conquered, the town's stubborn resistance had at any rate shown that its rights were not lightly to be tampered with. Its liberties, indeed, were restored and the way prepared for the further extension of its rights of self-government in the reign of Edward III; an extension which released its townsmen finally from the feudal claims of the Lords of Berkeley.

CHAPTER XXV

THE THIRD EDWARD

The death of the unhappy Edward II was to some extent avenged by his son. When he became king, Edward III was a lad of fifteen years, and the government was really in the hands of Mortimer and Queen Isabella. Three years after his father's death, however,

the young king allied himself with the enemies of Mortimer. The baron was seized and hanged, and thenceforward Edward III ruled in fact as well as in name.

His long reign is a memorable one in our history. Edward's descent from the French royal house, through his mother Isabella, gave him a pretext for claiming the throne of France. The campaigns by which he and his successors sought to enforce this claim were the source of many troubles to our country. Nevertheless they had the effect of finally welding together into one nationality the descendants of Norman baron and Saxon peasant. Both bore their parts manfully against the common foe in the glorious fights of Crecy and Poitiers, and in a hundred battles and sieges on the fields of France. The gentry of our land came to glory in the English name, and their French speech gave place to English. That language, of late despised by Norman baron and knight, began to bring forth its first great triumphs in the writings of Chaucer and Langland.

In many respects, too, the reign of Edward III heralds the approach of great changes, the dawn of modern times. Feudalism was breaking down, the conditions of land tenure in the country and of craftsmanship in the towns were changing. A spirit of change was also abroad in the Church, and many demanded a reform in religion and in the lives of its ministers. Meanwhile, in spite of the ravages of the most terrible plague that ever devastated our country, the wealth and influence of the towns greatly increased. Commerce and manufactures were much extended, and great towns such as Bristol obtained a larger degree of freedom and self-government than they had ever before enjoyed.

In the French wars of Edward III, Bristol furnished twenty-four ships and 608 men to the fleet which bore the king's army to the great victory of Crecy in 1346. In that fight the king's standard was borne by Sir Guy de Brian, whose tomb still stands in Tewkesbury Abbey. Not far from Sir Guy's tomb, in that great burial-place of Gloucestershire nobles, lies Edward, Baron le Despenser, who was one of the knights who helped the Black Prince

to win the great victory of Poitiers in 1356. There, too, the young head of the house of Berkeley fought with great courage, but with ill fortune. It was, we are told, the 'first time the young knight unfurled his banner'. He fought gallantly, but probably with too great a daring; he became separated from the victorious English army, was wounded and taken prisoner. Though afterwards ransomed for a great sum of money, he eventually died as a result of the wounds he received in the battle.

Three years after the battle of Crecy, England was scourged by the terrible plague known as the Black Death. During the Middle Ages, and, indeed, until comparatively recent years, plague broke out in our land at frequent intervals. But no visitation in our history was so deadly, nor so important in its effects upon the social condition of the people, as the Black Death of 1349. The pestilence spread westwards across Europe before appearing in our land on the coast of Dorsetshire. Thence it spread inland and Bristol was the first of the great towns to be attacked. There it raged with terrible severity. Multitudes were struck down, many dying within a few hours of being attacked, while few who were seized with the disease lived three days before succumbing. Grass grew in the principal streets, 'the whole strength of the town perished.'

In vain the townsfolk of Gloucester sought to prevent infection by cutting off communication with Bristol. Eastward to London, northward to Gloucester, the disease spread, and so passed like a devouring flame over the whole country. A great proportion, possibly a third, of the population of the land perished. At length the plague passed away, but it left lasting effects in profound changes in the social life of the people. The countryside was almost stripped of its peasantry and, as the supply of labour was decreased, wages naturally tended to rise. The landowners endeavoured to check this tendency by enforcing their rights over the villeins, and Parliament passed, and re-enacted at intervals, Statutes of Labourers, intended to prevent the rise of wages. But the force of circumstances was too strong for Parliament to hold in

check. Villeinage, although not extinct till long afterwards, was breaking down, and the system of landholding by payment of a fixed rent was taking its place. In the towns, too, the old close system of trade-guilds became weakened.

Amid these changes the wealth of the great merchants and of the great cities grew apace. For a long period England had been one of the chief sources from which Flanders, the great manufacturing district of Europe, drew its supplies of wool for the looms of its busy towns.

Under Edward III, however, attempts were made to encourage the manufacture of woollen goods in our own country. The development of the industry was aided by the fact that numbers of skilled Flemish weavers found it to their interest to settle down and ply their craft in England. The industry was for centuries the chief English manufacture, and it was destined to bring great prosperity to the sheep-rearing district of the Cotswolds.

Bristol took an important part in the growth of the woollen manufacture. The most prominent of those who set up looms in the town was a Thomas Blanket, who evidently employed foreign workmen. It is generally supposed that the article ' blanket ' gets its name from this craftsman. Probably both man and material derive the name from ' blanchette ', a white cloth. Thomas Blanket and his foreign workmen were not unnaturally unpopular among the members of the Weavers' Guild. They were annoyed in various ways, but nevertheless Blanket prospered, and the manufacture of woollen goods was greatly improved and developed.

The great importance of Bristol, by this time without question the second town in England, led to a further development in its government. The town being situated on the borders of the county, its distance from the county towns of Gloucestershire and Somerset, Gloucester and Ilchester respectively, was a serious burden to its traders. A Bristol merchant engaged in a suit in the county town had to make the journey on horseback. In the days of the third Edward this was no small matter. The

journey each way took up the greater part of two days and was, moreover, not without danger. Besides the chance of attack by robbers, the roads, which became in places little better than morasses in winter, were themselves a source of danger to the wayfarer. If, as might well happen, a man had suits in both the counties of Gloucester and Somerset, his difficulties were doubled. However, the great importance of the town, together with a money grant to the king, secured its relief from its dependent position upon the rest of the county. In 1373, Edward granted Bristol a charter by which it was created a county in itself, independent of the sheriff and courts of Gloucestershire. With the exception of London, Bristol was the first English town to be granted this privilege. Incidentally, this charter closed the long struggle between Bristol and the Berkeleys, lords of Redcliff. The part of the town on the south side of the Avon, together with the waters of that river itself and the neighbouring part of the Severn mouth, were included in the new county of Bristol.

Among other changes of the time there arose a great discontent in the minds of many thoughtful people with the corruption in the Church. Numbers of her professed servants, it was said, lived evil and vicious lives. It was within sight of our county,

On a May mornynge on Malverne hilles,

that the 'Vision concerning Piers the Plowman' came to William Langland. The poet bitterly satirized the evil lives of many of those whose vows bound them to the service of God. Chaucer, the first great English poet, also reflected, though in less bitter mood, the contempt which was widely felt for the worldly lives of the clergy.

Within the Church itself, too, there arose men who cried aloud for reform. One of the earliest of these was John Trevisa, vicar of Berkeley, who was patronized by the lords under the shadow of whose castle he dwelt. Trevisa is credited by Caxton with the translation of the Bible. The greatest of all the reformers, John Wycliffe, whose teachings prepared the way for the final breach

with the Church of Rome, was also connected with our county, where he held the prebend of Aust. The doctrines of Wycliffe were preached with great success in Bristol, and the town became one of the strongholds of the followers of the reformer.

CHAPTER XXVI

BUILDINGS IN THE DECORATED STYLE

During the reigns of the three Edwards the Pointed style of architecture reached its highest point in beauty of design and decoration. Buildings erected in this period of Gothic art are said to be in the Middle Pointed or Decorated Gothic style. As the names imply, the style grew out of the Early Pointed, and is especially marked by the beauty of its decorations.

As we have seen, the single lancet windows of the Early English style came afterwards to be grouped in twos or threes under a single arch. Further, the space between the grouped windows and the arch came to be pierced with a smaller window or windows. This plate tracery and grouping of lancet windows developed, in the Decorated period, into large windows of wonderful beauty. In a typical example a single large window is divided into compartments, corresponding to the lancet windows, by upright stone bars or mullions, while the arched top of the window is occupied by designs, often intricate in character, formed by straight or curved bars of stone. In the earlier decorated windows this arrangement of designs, or window-tracery, consists only of such figures as can be made by rule and compass. Tracery of this kind is therefore called geometrical tracery. In later decorated windows the tracery took wavy flowing lines and is therefore known as flowing tracery. Cheltenham Church, the tower of which has been mentioned as an example showing both lancet windows and grouped

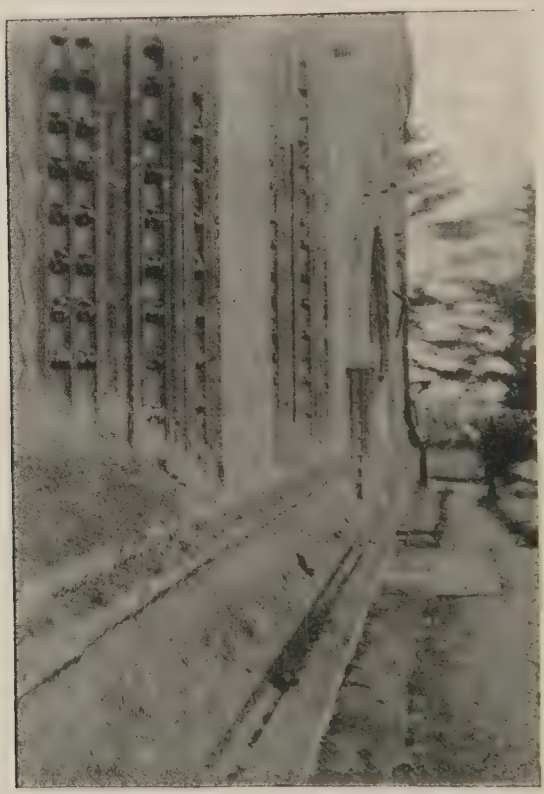
lancets with plate tracery, has a number of fine decorated windows. It also has a beautiful circular decorated or 'rose' window, and therefore furnishes an interesting example of the development of the newer style from the old.

But the increase in skill and the growth of the feeling for decorative beauty during this period was not confined to the treatment of the windows. It is shown throughout the whole structure. The craftsmen of the fourteenth century were marvellously skilful in carving in stone. Often the carvings were of natural objects, leaves or fruit, or the heads of kings or bishops, saints or angels. One ornament, however, is especially characteristic of the Decorated style, just as the dog-tooth is of the Early English. This is the ball-flower ornament, a globular flower, something like a yellow water-lily in shape, with a trefoil opening enclosing another ball. The beautiful windows of the south aisle of Gloucester Cathedral are profusely decorated with ball-flower. The ornament also occurs, though only in one or two places, in Tewkesbury Abbey. But its use was by no means confined to the great abbey churches, where we should naturally expect craftsmanship to reach its highest level. It occurs in many village churches, as, for example, in the Margaret chapel of Badgworth Church.

The Decorated period was the great building time as regards the ancient part of the present Bristol Cathedral. Everything east of the nave was rebuilt in the first half of the fourteenth century. The great windows of the choir are especially remarkable.

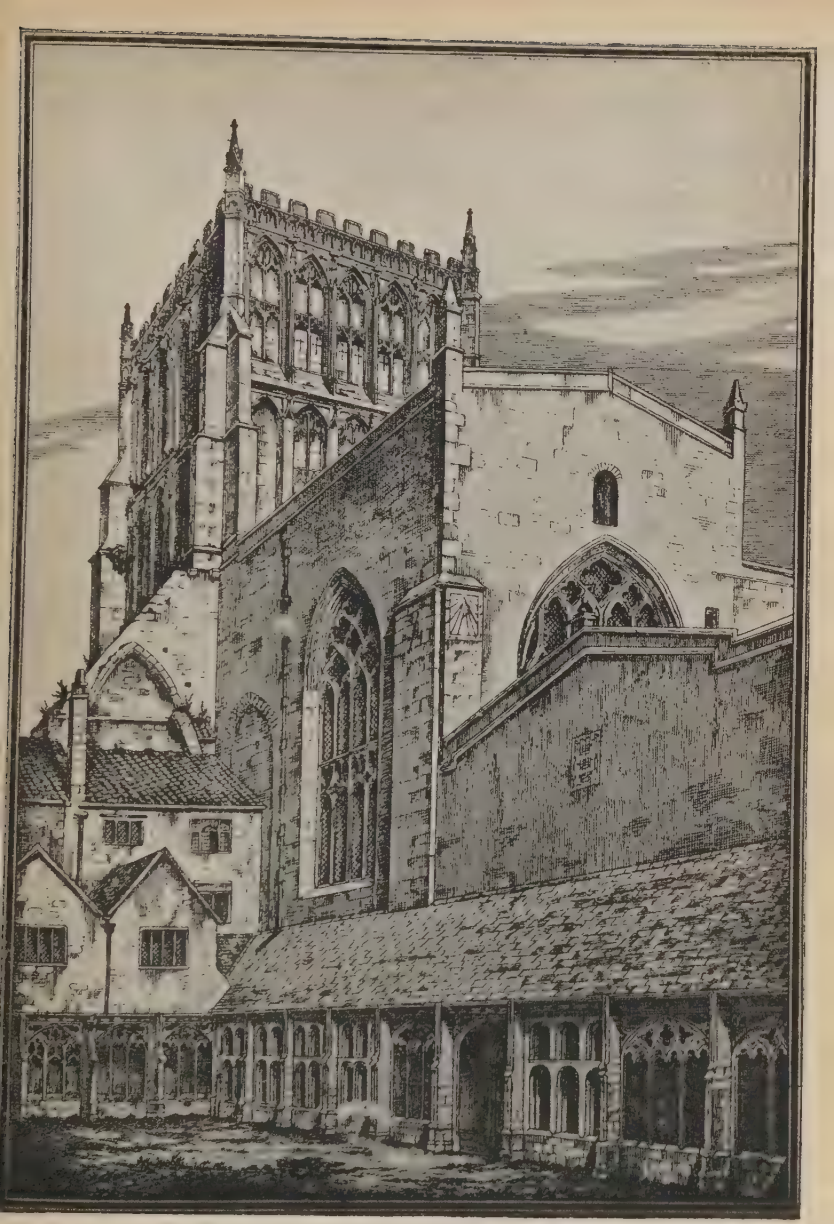
The marvellous craftsmanship and sense of beauty are shown not only in the structure and adornment of the churches themselves, but also in the memorials which the piety of descendants raised to the memory of the illustrious dead whose remains were buried within the sacred walls. One such tomb had important results not only upon the fortunes of the Abbey of Gloucester but also indirectly upon the whole history of English architecture. When the third Edward had established himself securely upon the throne he raised a beautiful

tomb above the remains of his murdered father Edward II. Upon the tomb his craftsmen placed a carved effigy of the dead king, and surmounted the whole with a marvellous



Ball-flower Ornament, Badgworth Church

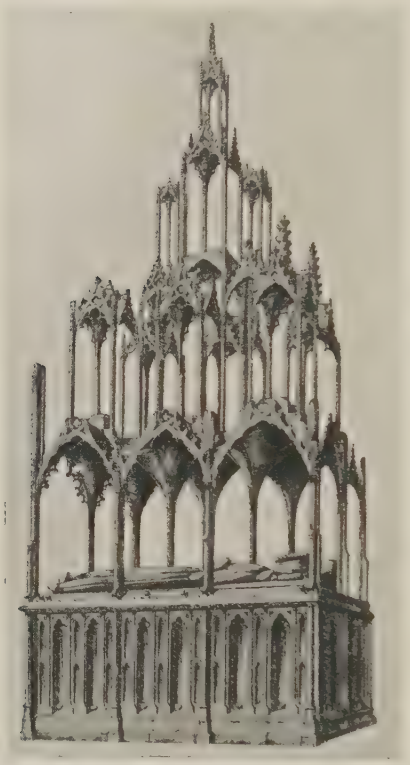
canopy of stonework so graceful and so light that the stone seems almost to have lost its qualities of weight and hardness. Nevertheless, so skilfully was it wrought that it still stands after the lapse of centuries a witness to the beauty of the art of the Middle Ages, and one of the



Bristol Cathedral (1799)

most beautiful—some would say the most beautiful—of English fourteenth-century tombs. The Despenser tomb at Tewkesbury is another splendid example of Decorated art.

Almost at once the tomb of Edward II became an object



The Despenser Tomb, Tewkesbury Abbey

of pilgrimage. Perhaps some feeling of the divinity that 'doth hedge a king', together with pity for Edward's awful fate, caused our forefathers to attach a special sanctity to his remains. Moreover, it was obviously to the advantage of the Abbey of Gloucester to encourage the cult of a local

' saint '. Miracles were reported to have taken place at his tomb. Streams of pilgrims from all parts of the land began to flock towards Gloucester, and the tomb became almost, if not quite, the most popular place of pilgrimage in England. Many a company, such as Chaucer has pictured setting forth joyously on pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Thomas at Canterbury, passed across the wind-swept Cotswolds or along the fertile Severn valley on the way to Gloucester. So great was the number of the pilgrims that the abbot in the fifteenth century built out of their spoils and for their use a ' New Inn ' which still, under that name, stands and preserves for us the arrangement of the ancient inns with their rooms grouped around a courtyard.

Many of the pilgrims no doubt included other sacred places in the county in their round of visits. The ' George ' at Winchcombe still shows the Pilgrims' Gallery which sheltered those who came to worship at the shrine of St. Kenelm, or to venerate the most holy of all English relics, a portion of the blood of the Saviour, which gave especial sanctity to Hailes Abbey. Perhaps it was from these objects of pilgrimage, or possibly from the number of churches in Gloucester town itself, that the old saying ' as sure as God 's in Gloucester ' arose.

The pilgrims who came to the tomb of Edward II at Gloucester left behind them gifts according to their degrees. Wealth poured in upon the brotherhood of monks, and the abbey suddenly found itself possessed of vast funds. So great was the wealth that the monks might, had they pleased, have rebuilt the whole of their massive Norman church. They chose, however, another course, and some inventive mind or minds among them incidentally gave birth to the last great style of Gothic architecture in our country.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE PERPENDICULAR STYLE

The monks of Gloucester decided to cover the old Norman work of their church east of the nave with stonework designed to give the building a light airy appearance in place of the heavy massiveness of the Norman structure. They therefore threw over the old building what, in the main, is a mere veil of new stonework. This new work was executed in the first half of the fourteenth century, a time when the Decorated style was universal in other parts of England. The Gloucester builders adopted quite a new style, the Perpendicular, which did not become general in England until the next century. Hence Gloucester Cathedral is the birthplace of Perpendicular architecture.

As the name implies, the distinguishing feature of the style is the perpendicular lines which give an effect of soaring altitude to the buildings. It is generally admitted that the Perpendicular style is less beautiful than the Decorated, and the question why the monks of Gloucester adopted the latter therefore arises. The general opinion is that they found perpendicular lines broken by horizontal ones and the consequent division of surfaces into rectangles especially well suited to masking the Norman work of the old church. Another opinion is that the style arose because of its suitability for the vast windows with their translucent glass which form so striking a feature of the Perpendicular churches.

The stained glass which formerly jewelled the windows of our ancient churches has, in most cases, long ago been broken into fragments. Most of it was destroyed either at the time of the breach with Rome or during the Puritan upheaval. Our county is, therefore, fortunate in possessing some fine examples of one of the most beautiful of the arts of the Middle Ages.

In the choir of Tewkesbury Abbey are a series of fourteenth-century windows representing a succession of the great lords of the town, Fitz Hamons, De Clares,

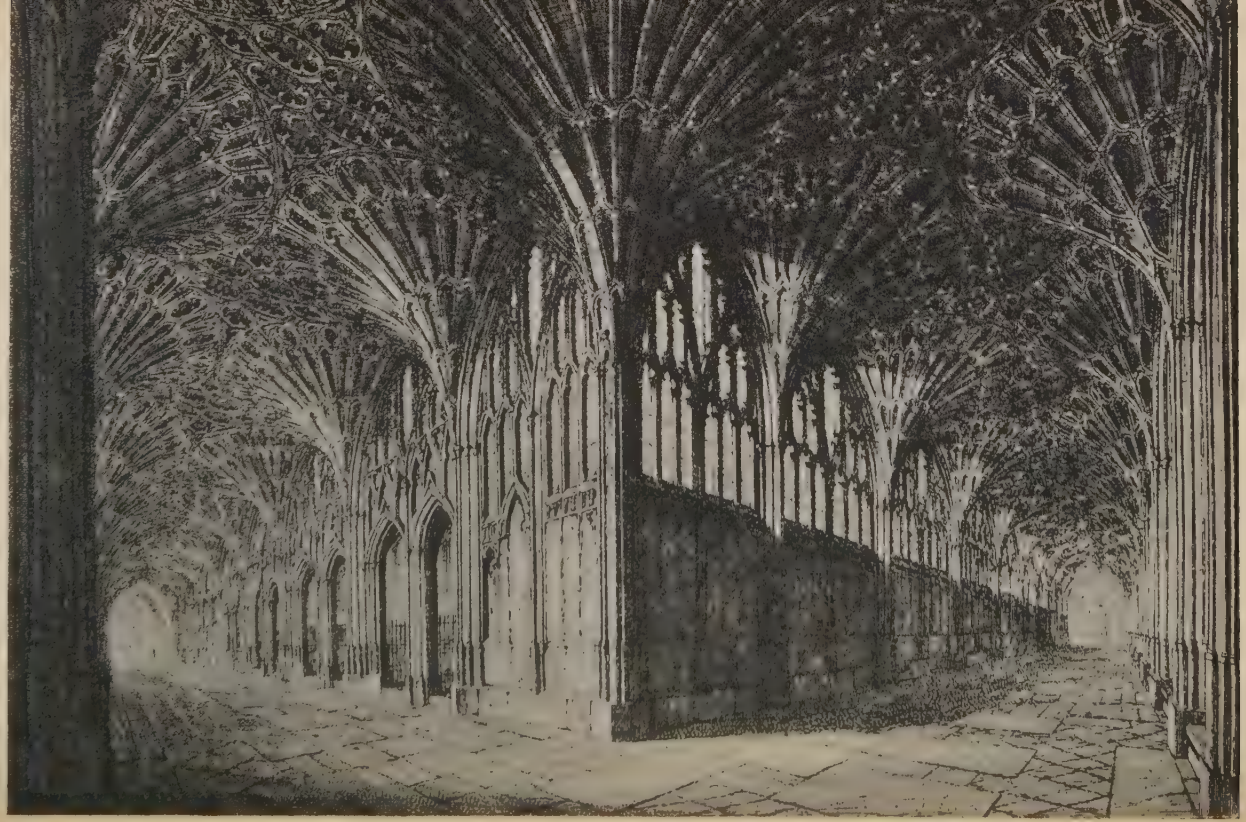
and their kindred. In Gloucester Cathedral the vast east window, the largest ancient window in England, contains glass which is shown, by the armorial bearings represented in it, to belong to the same date. But the glass in the two abbey churches is quite different in effect. Norman and Early English churches must have been very dark, as perhaps befitted buildings which were not only places of worship but refuges in troublous times. Even the large and supremely beautiful Decorated windows, which were glazed with glass equally beautiful in colour and in design, admitted little light. Such windows as those in Tewkesbury Abbey were in truth

> Storied windows richly dight,
> Casting a dim religious light.

But the great east window at Gloucester has as its first object the admission of light. The masses of colour are reduced in size and the greater part of the window is a silvery white, luminous in itself from the refraction of the light from the myriads of minute air-bubbles within the glass. Thus the pilgrims to Gloucester saw for the first time a choir flooded with light even under grey skies.

But the vast window, which turned the wall of the church in effect into a sheet of glass, could not have sustained of itself the weight of the roof for an instant, had not means been taken to take the pressure from the fragile glass. Hence part of the weight was supported by great buttresses balanced by pinnacles. Moreover, the window itself was strengthened by being divided into numerous lights separated by vertical stone bars or mullions, and further strengthened by horizontal bars or transoms. Thus the window became a gridiron of rectangles, and the same scheme was carried out throughout the building even in the treatment of blank walls. The east window at Gloucester has been called the ' Cressy Window ', because it is in effect a memorial of the nobles and knights connected with the county who fought in the great victory of the third Edward.

The genius of the builders of Gloucester Abbey also invented the very beautiful and entirely English method



of roof-vaulting known as fan-tracery. The splendid cloisters which the monks began early in the second half of the fourteenth century are generally held to be the earliest example of the use of this method of vaulting.

The Gloucester cloisters are perhaps the finest in our country. The interest which their beauty awakens is increased by the existence within them of the stone trough at which the monks washed, the recess in the wall for their towels, and the stone benches at which they sat at work upon their missals and parchments, and where, perchance, they worked out the plans for the great central tower and the Lady Chapel which in the fifteenth century completed the glories of their church.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE LAST OF THE PLANTAGENETS

Upon the death of Edward III in 1377, Richard, the son of the Black Prince, became king. The young sovereign, a lad of eleven years, ascended the throne in troubled times. The country found the expenses of the French war, which still went on, a heavy burden. Discontent among the labourers in the fields and the craftsmen in the towns was rife, and there was a general spirit of unrest and of change abroad in the land.

Parliament met at Gloucester in the year after Richard's accession, and re-enacted the Statute of Labourers. This was the last of a series of futile efforts to maintain the system of villeinage in its full vigour. The same Gloucester Parliament of 1378 is also noteworthy because for the first time the House of Commons demanded that accounts should be presented to show how the money which they voted was expended. The claim was of great importance, and marks the beginning of the claim of the Commons to control public expenditure. The king's ministers, in

urgent need of money to carry on the government, were reluctantly compelled to grant the demand.

The Gloucester Parliament of 1378 met in the buildings of the great Abbey of St. Peter in the town, the Lords sitting in the abbey guest-chamber, the Commons in the chapter-house. While the Parliament lasted the king and his followers dwelt either in the abbey or, occasionally, in the Abbey of Tewkesbury. The great influx of strangers into the quiet precincts of their abbey seems to have troubled the good monks of St. Peter's greatly, if we may judge from the account which they have left in their history of the foundation. Nobles and their followers crowded them out, so that the rightful occupants of the monastery had to dine and sleep where they could; wrestlers and ball players destroyed the cherished grass of the cloister courtyard; the whole place 'seemed more like a fair than a religious house'.

The session closed, we are told, with great ceremony and splendour. On the last Sunday of the sitting the Abbot of St. Peter's sang High Mass before the king, two archbishops, twelve bishops, many great lords, and a vast crowd of the common people. From the stately church of the abbey the king was conducted to the refectory, and there entertained by the monastery at a magnificent repast 'set out with great splendour'.

The reign of Richard II does not especially touch our county until towards its close. The young king had courage and capacity of which he gave proof in the quelling of the great revolt of the peasants of the Eastern Counties in 1381, when the very foundations of government were threatened. He was, however, idle and fond of pleasure, and his court was a scene of wanton extravagance and luxury. Hence his reign of twenty-two years is mainly occupied by a struggle, recalling the days of Edward II, between the king and a party of nobles in opposition to him and to his favourites. Many of the great churchmen, too, were opposed to the king.

After Richard had reigned some twenty years he took measures which for a time broke up the party opposed to him. Its leader, the king's uncle, Thomas of Wood-

stock, Duke of Gloucester, was seized near London and hurried to Calais. There, so it was given out, he died of an apoplexy, but everybody believed that he was smothered by order of his nephew. The other leaders of the opposition were got rid of; some were executed, some imprisoned, and some banished. The king's triumph appeared complete. The House of Commons, no longer supported by a powerful body of barons, was overawed by the king's soldiers and forced to do as he pleased. For a time Richard ruled as an absolute monarch.

But the very means by which the king had gained his temporary success contained the seeds of his own undoing. The most formidable, in character and ability, of the enemies whom he had banished was his cousin, Henry Bolingbroke, Duke of Hereford, the son of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. While Hereford was in banishment his father died. Contrary to a solemn promise which Richard had made, he seized upon the duke's vast possessions in order to defray the cost of an expedition to Ireland. The expedition set out and on his way the king and his army passed through Bristol.

The seizure of his estates gave Henry, now Duke of Lancaster, a plausible pretext for landing in England under the plea that he came merely to recover the lands which were his by right and justice. The king's absence in Ireland, moreover, gave him a favourable opportunity, and the general discontent with Richard's extravagance and misgovernment assured his success. Soon after his landing Henry was joined by the great northern earls and other nobles, and was soon at the head of a formidable force. The Duke of York, whom Richard had left as regent, found himself unable to make any real resistance.

> If I know
> How, or which way, to order these affairs,
> Thus thrust disorderly into my hands
> Never believe me.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Go muster up your men
> And meet me presently at Berkley castle.

So Shakespeare makes the duke speak in his play, *Richard II*. Others of the king's councillors, the Earl of Wiltshire, Bushy, Bagot, and Green, fled to Bristol, and being refused admission to the castle took possession of the town, wherein they hoped to defend themselves.

Meanwhile Henry Bolingbroke had advanced southwards and, passing through Evesham, ascended the Cotswold ridge. Act II, scene iii of *Richard II* opens in 'The Wilds in Glostershire'. Bolingbroke and Northumberland enter with their forces.

Boling. How far is it, my lord, to Berkley now?
North. Believe me, noble lord,
I am a stranger here in Glostershire.
These high wild hills, and rough uneven ways
Draw out our miles and make them wearisome.

Later on, young Harry Percy, surnamed Hotspur, the son of the Earl of Northumberland, enters, and in reply to a question as to the position of Berkeley Castle says:

There stands the castle, by yon tuft of trees,
Mann'd with three hundred men, as I have heard;
And in it are the lords of York, Berkley, and Seymour;
None else of name and noble estimate.

With such slender resources the Duke of York was powerless to take any active part against the invader. Bolingbroke and his army passed on

To Bristol castle, which they say is held
By Bushy, Bagot and their complices,
The caterpillars of the commonwealth
Which I have sworn to weed and pluck away.

When the duke's vanguard appeared before the walls of Bristol the gates were opened by the townsmen. The Earl of Wiltshire, Bushy, and Green were captured and executed at the High Cross of the town; Bagot managed to escape.

Thus when Richard succeeded in returning from Ireland,

where he had been detained by contrary winds, he found that his power had crumbled beneath his feet. He was soon a prisoner within the Tower, while his rival, no longer merely claiming his father's estates, was declared king under the title of Henry IV, by the Parliament.

One effort was, however, made by the friends of the deposed king to restore his fallen fortunes. A plot was laid to surprise Henry at Windsor, but, hearing of the scheme, he escaped to London and raised forces before which the conspirators were obliged to retreat hastily. Crossing Oxfordshire, they reached Cirencester and there encamped outside the town, while the leaders sought shelter for the night in one of the houses. During the darkness, however, the townsfolk, under the leadership of the bailiff, blocked up the doorways of the house with timber and then vigorously assailed the rebels with showers of stones and arrows. Throughout the darkness of the January night the besieged conspirators kept up a stout defence, but, in the morning, the mob of townsfolk poured into the house in overwhelming numbers. The defenders were forced to surrender on condition that their lives should be spared until they had been brought before the king. For safe custody they were then shut up in the abbey of the town.

Meanwhile, news of the night's doings had been spread far and wide over the countryside. From all quarters men poured into Cirencester, and the streets were thronged with an excited mob. Towards nightfall excitement gave way to fury. Fire broke out in the town, and the mob, whether rightly or not cannot be said, saw in the event a design of the enemy to consume ' with fire, our town of Cicester in Glostershire ' in order that they might escape in the confusion. At once the abbey was attacked by a furious mob, and the Earls of Kent and Salisbury were dragged forth and beheaded in the market-place. Lord Despenser got away from Cirencester, but, endeavouring to escape by sea, was captured, brought to Bristol, and beheaded. More than a score of other rebel leaders were sent to Oxford and there executed. The outbreak decided the fate of the unhappy Richard. There is little

doubt that he was murdered, though the exact manner of his death is unknown.

The new king showed his gratitude to the people of Cirencester for their stout support of his cause by grants to the bailiff and to the men and women of the town. Indeed, as the women received a greater grant than the men, it would seem that they took no small share in the fighting.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE RIVAL ROSES

Few events of importance connect the history of our county during the reign of the new king, Henry IV, with the general history of England. Bristol ships, it is true, did signal service against French pirates who infested the Channel. Moreover, when the Welsh were in rebellion and the English castles on the coast of Wales were blockaded by a French fleet, Bristol men again served their country well. All the efforts of the king's admiral, Lord Thomas of Berkeley, to break up the blockade failed. The castles must have surrendered had not two stout merchants of Bristol run the blockade over and over again and carried food to the English garrisons.

The county shared with the rest of England in the glorious but fruitless wars of Henry V in France. The ships of Bristol sailed in the fleet which bore his army to the siege of Harfleur, and Gloucestershire knights and yeomen served there and took part in the great fight of Agincourt.

The war with France dragged on long after the great king, Henry V, had died, and his unhappy son, the baby Henry VI, became nominal King of France. It lasted, indeed, becoming more and more hopeless every year, until the middle of the fifteenth century, when the infant king had grown to man's estate. Man though he now was

in years, the son of the martial Henry V was quite unfit for his position. He was pious and saintly in life, but the weakness of his rule gave the Yorkist branch of the descendants of Edward III an opportunity to put forward its claim to the throne.

The cruel and bloody Wars of the Roses broke out. As we shall see, however, our county prospered greatly during the fifteenth century in spite of the wars in France and at home. Fortunately the Wars of the Roses were in the main fierce faction fights between two parties of nobles, one of which favoured the regal claims of the House of Lancaster, the other of the House of York. While the feudal lords and their followers destroyed the power of their order in savage battles stained by countless acts of cruelty and treachery, the bulk of the people stood aloof from the strife. It is, however, true that the great towns generally favoured the Yorkist side. Our own great towns, Bristol and Gloucester, rendered signal service to the House of York.

Richard, Duke of York, who claimed the throne as the rightful heir, was slain in battle at Wakefield in 1461. At that time his son, Edward, Earl of March, was in Gloucestershire. The young prince, now the representative of the Yorkist claims, acted with great decision and promptitude. At the battle of Mortimer's Cross he defeated a Lancastrian army, and at once set out for London. Meanwhile Queen Margaret, the wife of Henry VI, was advancing southwards upon the capital. Her army defeated the Earl of Warwick, Edward's chief supporter, at St. Albans. Edward, however, won the race to the capital, and reached London before the queen. The citizens opened their gates and gladly received him as king.

As yet, however, he was by no means firmly seated upon the throne, for Queen Margaret held the whole of the north of England. Fortunately for the new king the plunderings of the wild northern borderers who followed her in her march towards London had deeply stirred the anger of the people of the south. In numbers greater than ever before during the Wars of the Roses, the

craftsmen of the towns and the husbandmen of the countryside came to support the Yorkist cause. When the young king marched northward the men of Bristol followed in his army under their banner of the 'Ship', and the men of Gloucester under their town's flag of the 'Dragon'.

The armies met at Towton and, in the bloodiest battle of the wars, the Lancastrians were routed and King Edward was established on the throne as the first of the Yorkist kings.

Edward IV owed his success more to Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, than to any other of his supporters. This great noble, known in history as the Kingmaker, was by far the most powerful noble of his time. In our own county he had succeeded to the great lordships formerly held in succession by the De Clares and Despensers. The estates of the latter had passed by marriage to the Beauchamps, Earls of Warwick, and the beautiful Beauchamp Chapel in Tewkesbury Abbey serves to remind us of the connexion of that great family with the lordship of the town. From the Beauchamps the estates and the title of Earl of Warwick passed to Richard Neville, who also inherited the earldom of Salisbury from his father. The estates of the earl in our county included, besides the lordship of Tewkesbury, the manors of Whittington, Chedworth, Fairford, Sodbury, Wickwar, and Lydney.

Warwick was, indeed, too great and too fond of power for a subject. He found his plans thwarted by Edward, who, resolute and active in danger, proved to be indolent and self-indulgent in peace. Differences between the king and the earl gradually led to an open quarrel, and Warwick fled to France. With him went Edward's brother, the Duke of Clarence, who had married Warwick's daughter and now turned traitor to the cause of his family.

In France Warwick and Clarence entered into an alliance with Queen Margaret. Returning to England, the earl was, within eleven days, master of England, and Edward was driven from the throne. The poor old

king, Henry VI, was brought out from the Tower and once more installed as a puppet-monarch on the throne.

But the triumph of the House of Lancaster was short-lived. Edward, in the days of his adversity, acted with characteristic energy. He got some help from Flanders, whither he had fled, and with a slender force landed in Yorkshire. The lords of his party rose at his summons, and at Coventry his brother, 'false, fleeting, perjured Clarence,' by a second act of treachery deserted his new allies. Edward then set out for London, and at Barnet the Earl of Warwick was defeated and slain. On the same day Queen Margaret landed on the south coast. Her chief hope, now that Warwick was dead, lay in the possibility of swelling her forces by the help of the Lancastrian lords of the west, and then uniting with the Welsh supporters of her cause. To do this she must pass the Severn, and thus, as in the days of De Montfort, the possession of the line of the Severn became of vital importance to the event of the struggle.

Margaret therefore advanced to Bristol. Meanwhile Edward had marched to Cirencester, and thence, by way of Malmesbury and Badminton, to Sodbury. There he halted, occupying the ancient camp upon a hill above the little town. The Lancastrians, however, did not attack his position. Quitting Bristol their army advanced northwards up the Severn valley, making for Gloucester by way of Berkeley.

When his scouts brought the news to Edward in the dead of night he at once broke up his camp. In the small hours of the morning his army was in full march along the ridge of the Cotswolds. Thus he kept a course parallel to the army of Margaret marching northward along the vale, while his scouts and outriders kept him in touch with the enemy's movements. It was a race between the contending armies, the Lancastrians aiming to cross the Severn and unite with their Welsh allies, the Yorkists seeking to bring them to battle before they could effect the crossing. Success or failure on either side depended largely on the possession of Gloucester. Edward, therefore, as he continued his toilsome march in 'right-

an-hot ' weather, with no food and but little water, sent forward swift mounted messengers to Gloucester, begging the governor of the castle, Sir Richard Beauchamp, to hold the town at all costs. Beauchamp was true to his trust. He shut the gates and threatened to hang from the walls any one who spoke of opening them.

In the forenoon the Lancastrian host appeared before the town, summoned it to surrender, and met with a stern refusal. Its leaders had therefore to decide whether to assault the place or to continue their march in the hope of crossing the river at Tewkesbury. Much depended upon their decision. Could they but gain possession of the town, or, indeed, could they but cross the river and hold the bridge, their position would be vastly strengthened, for already their Welsh allies under Jasper Tudor were reported to be at Newnham, only a few miles away. Beauchamp's resolute attitude and the appearance upon Robin's Wood Hill, overlooking the town, of some of Edward's scouts, whom the Lancastrians took to be the van of the Yorkist army, decided them to resume their weary march.

Meanwhile, the main body of Edward's army was in fact still at a considerable distance. It marched along the hills and through the Stroud Valley, and by way of Painswick to Birdlip Hill overlooking Gloucester. Thence, while the Lancastrians toiled along lanes and trackways to Tewkesbury, the army of King Edward poured down the slopes of Leckhampton Hill to the poor little village of ' Chiltenham '. There they had a short rest, after a wonderful march of more than thirty miles over rough and hilly ways. There, too, they refreshed themselves with such scanty provisions as they could find in the village, eked out by the better fare from the stores of the Bishop of Hereford's hunting lodge at Prestbury hard by.

At Cheltenham Edward heard that the Lancastrians had taken up position of battle at Tewkesbury. They could undoubtedly have passed the river, but they believed Edward much nearer than he actually was and dreaded his attack while their army was straggling across the Severn. Moreover, the Lancastrians, like their foes,

were worn out by their long march, and Tewkesbury, then a flourishing town, offered store of refreshment.

In spite of the exhaustion of his troops Edward at once determined to encamp within striking distance of the foe. Though night had fallen he pressed on from Cheltenham, and at last allowed his wearied army to rest on Tredington Common, not three miles distant from Queen Margaret's quarters.

Early morn of Saturday, May 4, found the Lancastrians drawn up in a field called the Vineyard—a name which occurs at several places in Gloucestershire, and which reminds us that the county was, in the Middle Ages, famous for the cultivation of the vine. They occupied a strong position which was difficult to assault because of the hedges, bushes, and ditches by which its front was masked. Their line stretched from Lincoln Green on the right to the Swilgate Brook upon the left, while in the centre of the position was a ridge of rising ground upon which Lord Wenlock was stationed with archers and a few cannon. The Duke of Somerset was in chief command, and with him was the young Prince Edward, the only son of Henry VI and Queen Margaret.

The Yorkist host advanced to the attack with the king's youngest brother, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, in command of the van, while King Edward himself led the centre. The battle began with a discharge of arrows and cannon shot. But though the Yorkist army was much better supplied with cannon than the Lancastrians, its fire caused little impression. Then followed fierce hand-to-hand fighting in the difficult ways and fields fronting the position. For a time the soldiers of Queen Margaret stoutly held their own. At length, however, the Duke of Somerset imprudently dashed out of his position to attack the Yorkists, and, as the soldiers of the Duke of Gloucester passed over to engage the Lancastrian wing, came into fierce combat with the powerful centre of his enemy led by King Edward. Finding himself hard pressed Somerset sent messages to Lord Wenlock to come to his assistance. He sent, however, in vain. Either because he realized the folly of Somerset's sally, or because he himself was

threatened by a body of Yorkists who had worked round to the flank of his position, Wenlock refused to move. Somerset was forced to retreat. Maddened by defeat and by what he conceived to be the treachery of Lord Wenlock in not coming to his aid, he thought rather of avenging the fancied treason than of restoring the battle. Galloping madly up the slope, brandishing his battle-axe, he dashed out the brains of Lord Wenlock, who stood unsuspecting and quite unprepared for the attack. Wenlock's troops, for their part, saw treason in Somerset's mad act. Convinced that they were betrayed by their friends, they broke and fled. King Edward forced his way into the heart of the Lancastrian position, and the battle became a rout.

In every direction fled the soldiers of the last army of Henry VI, hotly pursued by their foes. Some ran towards the wide deep waters of the Severn. A few succeeded in swimming across, more were drowned in the attempt. Hundreds fell in the field which slopes down to the lane leading to the Lower Lode, the ferry over the Severn just below Tewkesbury. So dreadful was the carnage here that the field is known to this day as the 'Bloody Meadow', and the spade there still turns up the mouldering bones of those who fell in the horrible carnage. Others, flying towards the town, were entrapped and slain in the marshes by the river-side. The Swilgate Brook ran blood, and was choked with corpses near the abbey bridge. Some, however, outstripped their pursuers and took sanctuary within the abbey. But though the right of sanctuary had up to this time been generally respected, even in these savage wars, the ties of religion did not avail to bind the avenging hands of the Yorkist soldiery. They burst into the church and slew their vanquished foes as they clung to the altars of the abbey and its chapels. The place was a shambles, though in front of the high altar stood the Abbot of Tewkesbury, holding forth the Sacrament of the Host, and calling upon the maddened soldiers in the name of the Most High to stay the slaughter.

At length the carnage was stopped. King Edward

with his chief officers marched from the battle-field to the abbey, and before the high altar rendered thanks to the God of battles for the victory. Of the Lancastrians who had escaped the slaughter in the field, in the flight, and in the church, some thirty of noble and knightly rank were held prisoners over the Sabbath in the abbey, but the prisoners of low degree were set free. On Monday the Lancastrian nobles and knights were brought before the Duke of Gloucester as Constable of England, sitting in judgement at the Tolsey. They were condemned to death. Some, however, were pardoned, but the Duke of Somerset, the Earl of Devonshire, and a number of other leaders were executed at the High Cross in the middle of the town. King Edward, it is said, looked out upon the execution from the windows of the house in which he was lodging opposite the town cross.

The young Prince Edward, the last direct descendant of the House of Lancaster, perished at Tewkesbury, either slain in the battle itself or murdered in cold blood subsequently. The account, which for long was generally received, represents the young prince as being brought prisoner before King Edward. The king demanded his justification for bearing arms in rebellion. To use the words of Shakespeare :

> What ! can so young a thorn begin to prick ?
> Edward, what satisfaction canst thou make
> For bearing arms, for stirring up my subjects,
> And all the trouble thou hast turn'd me to ?

The prince answered boldly and haughtily :

> Speak like a subject, proud ambitious York !
> Suppose that I am now my father's mouth ;
> Resign thy chair ; and where I stand kneel thou,
> Whilst I propose the self-same words to thee.

And again :

> I am your better, traitors as ye are ;—
> And thou usurp'st my father's right and mine.

Whereupon the king, according to the story followed by Shakespeare, stabbed the prince, or, according to others, struck the youth down with his gauntlet, while his brothers, the Dukes of Gloucester and Clarence, rushed in and stabbed the prince to death with their daggers. Shakespeare's account, however, is taken from an author who wrote in later times, when the Tudors, who derived their claim to the throne from the House of Lancaster, sat upon the throne. In Tudor times, therefore, versions unfavourable to the House of York were naturally well received. But writers who were living at the time of the battle say that the young prince was slain on the field. Whatever the manner of his death may have been, his body was buried in the Abbey of Tewkesbury.

A few days after the battle the last of the Lancastrian kings, Henry VI, died, almost certainly by the hand of a murderer, in the Tower of London. The direct line of the House of Lancaster was extinguished.

But the descendants of Richard of York were doomed to a speedy and almost as complete an extinction. Only a few years after the battle of Tewkesbury, George, Duke of Clarence, was executed—drowned, it is said, in a butt of Malmsey wine—on a charge of treason against his brother the king. His body was borne to the Abbey of Tewkesbury, and laid by the side of his wife, Isabella Neville, the Lady of Tewkesbury, who had died the year before. Thus false Clarence was laid in death under the same sacred roof as the young prince whom he is said to have stabbed ' in the field by Tewkesbury '.

Edward IV reigned for some nine years after the battle by the Severn side. He left two sons, the ' Princes in the Tower ' whose murder is one of the many crimes laid to the charge of their uncle, Richard, Duke of Gloucester. Richard himself as king reigned but two years. His defeat by Henry Tudor and death on Bosworth Field ended the line of the House of York.

CHAPTER XXX

THE OLD ORDER AND THE NEW

The disturbed condition of affairs and the frequent weakness of the king's government during the Wars of the Roses gave great licence to the great barons. In a number of cases they fought out their private quarrels in defiance of the laws, levying war against one another like petty sovereigns. A noteworthy example of this lawless spirit was furnished by the battle of Nibley Green near Stinchcombe.

For many years the great houses of Berkeley and Talbot had been at deadly variance. The quarrel arose out of a struggle for the estates of the lordship of Berkeley. The tenth lord died in the early part of the fifteenth century. He was succeeded by his nephew, but the estates were claimed by Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, who had married the tenth lord's daughter. The earl, one of the most powerful nobles of the time, seized Berkeley Castle and held it until King Henry V ordered him to give it up. After the death of Henry V the struggle went on and there were numerous fights, in which the townsfolk of Berkeley suffered severely.

In course of time the claim of the Earl of Warwick passed, by the marriage of his daughter, to her husband, John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury. The struggle, legal and by force of arms, for the rich inheritance of the Berkeleys was keenly maintained by the Talbots. A number of fights between adherents of the rival houses took place, and at length Lord Lisle, son of the Earl of Shrewsbury, succeeded in surprising Berkeley Castle. He carried off Lord Berkeley and his sons to Bristol, and there for a time held them prisoners in the House of the Grey Friars.

While 'valiant Lord Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury', was absent in France during the reign of Henry VI, fighting the last hopeless fight to recover the English conquests in

that country, the quarrel with the Berkeleys was maintained by his wife. The countess seized upon Lady Berkeley and imprisoned her at Gloucester. There the poor lady died of a broken heart.

The Earl of Shrewsbury and his son, Lord Lisle, died fighting desperately in the last battle of the French war. For a time there was a truce between the houses of Berkeley and Talbot, but in the troubled times of the Wars of the Roses the struggle was revived by young Lord Lisle, grandson of the Earl of Shrewsbury. Lisle plotted with some of the servants of Lord Berkeley for the surrender of the castle. One of these, the porter of the stronghold, smitten by conscience or faint-hearted at the last moment, confessed the meditated treason to his lord and ruined the plot.

Thereupon Lord Lisle, who was only some twenty years of age, drew up a challenge and dispatched it to his adversary. He required him by his knighthood and manhood to appoint a day and to come forth ' to try between God and our two hands all our quarrel and title of right '. Lord Berkeley was not slow to take up the challenge. On the following day he wrote ' I will appoint a short day to ease thy malicious heart and the false counsel that is with thee ; fail not to-morrow to be at Nibley Green at eight or nine of the clock, and I will not fail, with God's might and grace, to meet thee in the same place.'

At once Lord Berkeley sent to gather his followers together, from Berkeley, Thornbury, the Forest of Dean, and his many manors in the county. A party of the men of Bristol, too, under their mayor, came to his aid. The ancient enmity between the town and the Berkeley family was by this time forgotten, and for several reasons the men of Bristol, always ready for a fight, favoured the Berkeleys rather than the Talbots. The majority of the townsfolk sided with the House of York, and the Berkeleys were Yorkists while the Talbots were Lancastrians. Moreover, Lord Berkeley's cousin, Sir Maurice, had married the daughter of one of the great Bristol merchants, while, on the other hand, there was a feud between the

city and Lord Lisle, because, not long before this time, one of his wife's relatives had been slain in a quarrel in the town.

Lord Berkeley, short though the notice was, gathered together an army of about a thousand men. Very early in the morning of March 20, 1470, his forces concealed themselves in a wood on Michelwood Chase, near Nibley Green, and there lay in wait for the enemy. Soon after sunrise, Lord Lisle and his followers were seen topping the brow of the hill and marching down its slopes to the open green. The young lord led a band much smaller in number than the force of Lord Berkeley and appears to have been unconscious of his enemy's ambush in the wood, for he rode to the field of battle with his beaver up.

When he and his men had advanced within bowshot, the forces of Lord Berkeley poured out of the wood and let fly a shower of arrows. The battle was sharp and short. Lord Lisle, his beaver still unclosed, was shot in the mouth with an arrow from the bow of 'Black Will', an archer from the Forest of Dean. So strongly was the bow pulled that the arrow transfixed the neck of the young lord. He fell from his horse and was stabbed to death as he lay on the ground.

Surprised and outnumbered, Lord Lisle's followers broke and fled. They ran across the green and up the lane leading steeply to Nibley Church, hotly pursued by the men of Berkeley. The fight over, Lord Berkeley led his men from the field of battle to Wotton-under-Edge, where they sacked the manor-house of the dead Lord Lisle.

The sharp fight on Nibley Green closed the long quarrel between the Berkeleys and the Talbots, and the fact that but little notice of the fight was taken at the time is a striking evidence of the disordered condition of affairs during the Wars of the Roses.

While the great nobles and barons were slaughtering one another on the battle-fields of civil and private wars, or by the axe of the executioner, and thus destroying the power of their own order, the trading and merchant

classes were rapidly rising in power and importance, and laying the foundations of new social conditions.

As we have seen, the inhabitants of the trading towns took on occasion an effective part, generally on the Yorkist side, in the Wars of the Roses. Nevertheless, as a rule, the commercial classes were content to let the nobles and their retainers fight out the quarrel for themselves. Indeed, in many parts of the country, and very markedly in our own county, the wealth and influence of the merchants and traders increased greatly during the fifteenth century. This was especially the case with the merchants of Bristol and the woolmen of the Cotswold. The city by the Avon, and many of the towns and villages of the Cotswold to this day furnish evidence in their glorious churches of the wealth of the merchants who built or adorned them.

The greatest of the Bristol merchants in wealth and public spirit was William Canynges.

He was the third of a line of great Bristol merchants. His grandfather, also named William, was six times mayor of the town. His father, John, was twice mayor. William Canynges himself occupied the mayoral chair five times and twice sat in Parliament as the representative of his native town. He employed eight hundred seamen to man his ships and a hundred workmen of different crafts in addition. So great was his influence that a special exception was made in favour of Canynges in a treaty regarding trade made with the King of Denmark.

The influence of Canynges was more than merely local. Like his half-brother, Thomas Yonge, who was imprisoned in the Tower of London for his adherence to the Duke of York, he rendered great service to the Yorkist cause.

Though Canynges was the greatest of the Bristol merchants there were others also of great riches and public spirit. A number of them employed a part of their wealth in building churches and towers for the adornment of their town. Canynges himself almost entirely rebuilt the church of St. Mary Redcliff, and made it ' the fairest, the goodliest, and most famous parish church in England '.

John Shipward, who led the men of Bristol to the battle of Nibley Green, built the tower of St. Stephen's Church. Similarly the woolmen of the Cotswold employed their

Brass of John Fortey, Northleach Church

wealth freely in beautifying the churches of their towns. The splendid churches of Chipping Campden, Northleach, Winchcombe, and Cirencester, owe their chief glories to the prosperity of the wool trade during the fifteenth century. Then and for long afterwards the wool of

'the sheep our wold doth breed' brought abundant prosperity to the graziers and the wool merchants of the hills. Drayton, writing in the reign of Elizabeth, sings the praises of the Cotswold sheep

> Whose browes so woolly be
> As men in her fair shape no emptiness shall see,
> The staple deep and thick, through to the very graine
> Most strongly keepeth out the violentest raine.

In a number of the Cotswold churches, Northleach, Chipping Campden, Cirencester, and Lechlade, there still exist memorial brasses to the worthy merchants who grew rich by selling their 'good Cotteswolde woll'. They were by no means ashamed of their trade. Most of the brasses bear the emblems of the woolmen—the woolpack, the sheep, or the shepherd's crook. In Northleach Church there is a whole series of these brasses; Thomas Fortey, with his wife and her second husband; John Fortey, John Taylour, and Thomas Bushe. The last-named brass bears the arms of the Staple of Calais, showing that Bushe was one of the merchants dealing in English wool at Calais, the dépôt for the English wool trade with the Continent. In Chipping Campden Church is a splendid brass to the memory of William Grevel, described in a Latin inscription as 'the flower of the wool-merchants of all England'.

CHAPTER XXXI

WESTWARD HO! THE CABOTS

It is usual to regard the accession of Henry VII, the first of the Tudor sovereigns, as marking the close of the Middle Ages and the beginning of modern times in our history. The date is convenient, for, though it is of course impossible to fix an exact year for such a transition, Henry VII, by sternly keeping down the power of the

great nobles, and by encouraging the growth of trade and commerce, powerfully assisted the forces which had long been sapping the social and religious foundations of the life of the Middle Ages. Moreover, the great movement known as the Revival of Learning profoundly affected England during Tudor times. An active spirit of inquiry into all departments of learning took the place of the barren learning of the Middle Ages.

This eager desire for knowledge found one expression in the great ocean voyages of the latter part of the fifteenth century ; the voyage of Columbus, which brought a new world within the ken of Europe, and the voyage of Vasco da Gama, which laid open the sea-route to the riches of the East. In these, the greatest of all ocean voyages, our country can claim no share. But few other maritime discoveries have been more important than those of the Cabots, with which the city of Bristol is inseparably connected.

Indeed, even before the time of the first great voyage of Columbus, his project of reaching the Indies by sailing westward across the Atlantic seems to have been anticipated by some of the Bristol mariners.

Dim stories of lands lying westward in the great ocean, especially of the fabled Island of Brazil, had also been told. As early as 1480, says William Wyrcestre, a burgess of Bristol who was living at the time, some Bristol merchants sent out an expedition upon the great westward quest. It was, we are told, under the command of one 'Llyde, the most scientific mariner in all England', and was commissioned to sail westward of Ireland until it should reach the 'island of Brasylle'. Nor does Llyde's voyage, which had no useful result, seem to have been the only early attempt at Atlantic exploration by Bristol mariners. A Spaniard, writing to his sovereigns in 1498, says that the Bristol people had for seven years past annually sent forth expeditions in search of the same mythic island of Brazil.

The first British expedition to reach land upon the other side of the Atlantic, however, did not set sail until 1497. Its leader was John Cabot, like Columbus

a Genoese by birth, who had, however, become a Venetian subject. Cabot had for some time lived at Bristol, and, in 1496, he received a patent from King Henry VII authorizing him to make voyages of discovery, and to take possession in the king's name of any lands he might discover.

In May, 1497, John Cabot, probably accompanied by his son Sebastian, set out from Bristol in a little vessel called the *Matthew*, manned by eighteen sailors.

On June 24 the expedition sighted land which Cabot called Prima Vista. This was probably a part of Cape Breton Island. Here the explorer landed and planted the flags of England and of St. Mark. Other islands were sighted and apparently a great part of the waters of the Gulf of St. Lawrence was explored. If, as is generally believed, Cabot discovered the mainland of America during this voyage, he anticipated by one year Columbus's landing upon the mainland. Cabot, like Columbus, thought that he had reached the eastern shores of Asia. When the *Matthew* returned and once more dropped anchor in Bristol Harbour he announced that he had discovered the territories of ' the Grand Cham ', that is, of the sovereign of China.

The story of his success aroused the greatest interest. The popular imagination was stirred by visions of fabulous wealth to be had for the taking in the new lands across the ocean. The king, too, was deeply interested and granted Cabot a pension, to be paid out of the custom receipts of Bristol. For a time the explorer abode in his adopted town in great honour, being styled the ' Great Admiral ' and dressing in costly raiment of silk.

The success he had attained inspired him to further efforts and there was now no lack of support for the enterprise. Cabot hoped to discover the Spice Islands and thus secure a share of the vast riches which had flowed into Venice from its Mediterranean trade in the spices of the East. In 1498 he set sail from Bristol with a larger expedition. He was now in command of three hundred men and was accompanied by a number of vessels fitted

out by merchants who were anxious to share in the anticipated profits.

Unfortunately, the information which we have concerning the voyages of the Cabots is derived at second-hand from authors in whose accounts there is much that is contradictory or doubtful. Moreover, there are many gaps in the narrative. We do not, for example, know anything further about John Cabot. Again, the birthplace of Sebastian Cabot, who continued his father's work, is a matter of doubt. It has generally been held by English writers that he was born at Bristol, but some later writers have cast serious doubts upon this. The difficulty of coming to a decision on the point is increased by the fact that Sebastian himself gave varying accounts. Thus, when he was seeking to be employed by Venice, he declared that he was born in Venice, but brought up in England. On the other hand, he, when an old man, is reported to have told a friend that 'he was born in Brystowe', and, further, that the idea that he was a Venetian arose from the fact that at an early age he was taken to Venice and lived there for some years before returning to England with his father. English writers of his own time certainly regarded Sebastian Cabot as a Bristol man by birth.

In the voyage of 1498, Cabot appears to have explored the coasts of Labrador, sailing north-west until he encountered 'suche heapes of Ice' that he was forced to turn back. He then came to a land where the seas teemed with codfish; a land which was, no doubt, Newfoundland. Continuing his journey southward, he explored the coast to a point in about the latitude of Cape Hatteras. Thence he shaped his course eastward and made his way home, carrying with him animals from the lands he had discovered and three savages, who were clad in the skins of beasts and who ate raw flesh.

No great results followed immediately from the voyages of the Cabots. Gold, the great object of adventurers in all ages, had not been found, and the enterprises probably brought loss rather than gain to the Bristol merchants. Moreover, the inhospitable shores of Newfoundland

offered no such prospect of ease and affluence as the glowing islands of the West Indies held out to the Spanish settlers. Other expeditions were, indeed, sent out by Bristol merchants, by one Robert Thorne and others, but they do not appear to have achieved much success. Cabot himself left England soon after Henry VIII came to the throne and spent some years in the service of the King of Spain. He finally returned to England, however, and died at an advanced age in the country of his adoption.

Ultimately, however, the voyages of the Cabots were of very great importance to our country. Upon their discoveries was based the claim of England to the eastern seaboard of North America. Hence, historically, the origin of the great English-speaking peoples of Canada and the United States of America is to be found in the voyages in which John and Sebastian Cabot piloted the ships of Bristol across the western ocean.

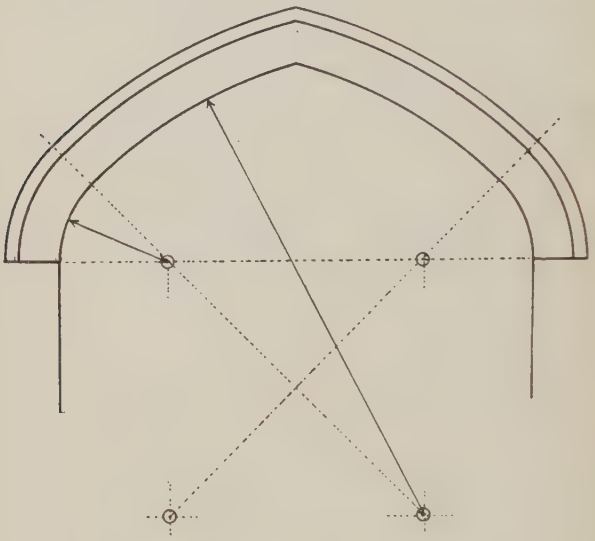
CHAPTER XXXII

PERPENDICULAR BUILDINGS

During the fifteenth century the use of the Perpendicular style, which, as we have seen, originated at Gloucester in the preceding century, became general throughout England. All the churches of that time show the great windows with mullions and transoms and the rectangular panelling of surfaces which characterize the style. The arch, moreover, took a different shape. Though still pointed it became flattened or depressed. As the diagram shows, its shape was obtained by arcs of circles struck from four centres, and it is therefore sometimes called a four-centred arch. In keeping with the usual rectangular panelling of the style, the arch was generally

enclosed in a rectangular frame. The spaces between the arch and its frame, called spandrils, were generally adorned with carvings, frequently of shields with armorial bearings.

It is generally admitted that the Perpendicular style is not so beautiful as the Decorated at its best. Upon the continent of Europe, however, the Decorated style



Four-centred Arch

gradually became degraded by being overloaded with ornament, which was often useless and meaningless; decorations in which the craftsman appears bent rather upon showing his own ingenuity than upon beautifying the building as a whole. The general adoption of the Perpendicular style in England, at any rate prevented such a degradation of the Decorated art, and Perpendicular buildings in our own county and in many other parts of our land furnish ample evidence of the dignity which the newer style was capable of attaining.

The two cathedrals of our county contain a good deal of fifteenth-century work. Gloucester Cathedral, as we have seen, had been largely transformed into a Perpendicular building in the preceding century. An abbot who ruled in the first half of the fifteenth century pulled down and rebuilt the two western bays of the Norman nave. He intended, indeed, to pull down and rebuild the

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whole nave. Fortunately his intention was not carried out, and the great Norman piers and arches still stand in their impressive grandeur. But the latter part of the century saw the building of two exquisitely beautiful additions to the church. While the Wars of the Roses were raging, the monks of Gloucester were peacefully occupied in raising the great central tower of their church. In stately and graceful beauty it is unsurpassed among Perpendicular towers, and scarcely rivalled except, perhaps, by the famous 'Bell Harry' tower at Canterbury. Later

Chipping Campden Church

the monks of Gloucester completed the building as it now stands,—a history in stone of English art in the Middle Ages—by the erection of a beautiful Lady Chapel.

The central tower of Bristol Cathedral was built early in the fifteenth century. The splendid Perpendicular church of St. Mary Redcliff in the same city stands on the Somersetshire side of the Avon.

Fairford Church

Tewkesbury Abbey was far less affected by Perpendicular art than the sister abbey churches of Gloucester and Bristol. A number of the tombs which surround the choir are, however, fine examples of the style.

Historically, no perpendicular buildings in our county are more interesting than the Cotswold churches of the period. Their size and magnificence seem, not infrequently, strangely out of proportion to the quiet, almost dreamy, little towns and villages above whose grey roofs

they tower. Their stately size and the wealth of their adornment are striking evidences of the prosperity of the days in which they were built.

The church at Cirencester is a building of great size and beauty, with a noble tower and many features of great interest. Northleach Church, again, has a beautiful tower and porch and is rich in ancient memorial brasses. The church at Chipping Campden has a fine tower in the Perpendicular style. Winchcombe Church, though perhaps not so beautiful as some, is impressive from its size and dignity. Its extraordinary gargoyles have all the appearance of being caricatures of actual persons—the lasting jokes of ancient craftsmen.

Fairford Church is the permanent memorial to the piety of the wealthy merchant, John Tame, by whom it was founded in the fifteenth century. The church is beautiful in itself, but its chief glory is its splendid series of twenty-eight ancient stained-glass windows—a series almost, if not quite, unequalled elsewhere in England.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE NEW LEARNING AND THE NEW RELIGION

The Revival of Learning left a profound mark not only upon worldly knowledge, but also upon man's spiritual beliefs. The new spirit of inquiry was not satisfied to accept without question the authority of the Pope or the truth of many of the doctrines of the Roman Church. Indeed, as we have seen, the desire for some reform in the Church was no new thing in our country. The teachings of Wycliffe and his followers had awakened in many minds a discontent, which had never wholly died out, with the conduct of the Church and with some of its doctrines. The Revival of Learning gave a great stimulus to the demand for reform. Men who had been influenced by the New Learning and by its spirit of independent inquiry, studied

the Scriptures in the original languages, and drew from their studies conclusions not always in agreement with the doctrines of the ancient Church. Hence there arose in our country, as in the other countries of Central and Western Europe, a long period of bitter religious quarrels, illuminated by some splendid examples of heroic constancy and devotion, but blackened by many hideous crimes.

Prominent among the scholars who brought the spirit of the New Learning to bear upon the doctrines of the Church, and who fought strenuously for reform, was William Tyndale, whose name was for centuries enrolled in the list of the illustrious sons of our county. Indeed, the belief that the reformer was a native of North Nibley in Gloucestershire is commemorated by the lofty column to his memory which crowns the summit of Nibley Knoll, and which is a prominent object over many miles of hill and vale. This striking monument was erected in 1866, but later researches are held to show that the William Tyndale who was born at North Nibley was not the reformer. Melksham Court, Stinchcombe, in our county, has also been claimed as Tyndale's birthplace, but all that we can say with certainty regarding the matter is that he was born somewhere ' on the borders of Wales '.

But wherever Tyndale's birthplace may have been, his name is closely connected with the history of our county, for after studying at both our ancient universities he became tutor to the children of Sir John Walsh, the lord of the manor of Old Sodbury in Gloucestershire. Moreover, it was here that he first began to give expression to the zeal for reform to which he had been led by his studies. He spoke fearlessly in setting forth the new doctrines and engaged in many disputations with the clergy who clung to the ancient doctrines and authority of their church. During his stay at Sodbury also, he had evidently formed the design of the translation of the Scriptures which was to form his great life-work. In argument with a divine who held by the ancient ways of the Church, he declared, we are told, that by God's help he would take care that even a ploughboy should be able to know the Scriptures. But this great design of rendering the Bible into simple

and homely English, a task which was to supplement the work of Trevisa and Wycliffe, was not to be carried out in the peaceful manor house of Old Sodbury.

The reformer's fearless expression of his views raised such a storm of opposition that he was obliged to leave the Gloucestershire village and to seek refuge in London. Even the great city itself did not long afford any adequate protection to him, and Tyndale therefore made his way to the Continent. There, for more than ten years, he led a wandering life, driven from place to place by persecution, and in almost constant danger of imprisonment and death. His wanderings and danger, however, did not turn him from his purpose. The first great result of his labours was the translation of the New Testament into English, so noble in its beautiful simplicity that it has left its mark imperishably upon the Authorized Version of the Bible, and is, therefore, from a literary point of view, one of the great triumphs of English prose.

Undoubtedly, too, its homely vigour and sincerity had a great influence in furthering the cause of the reformers in England. Within a few years of its first publication, six editions, numbering, perhaps, some fifteen thousand copies in all, were printed and smuggled into England. Passed secretly from hand to hand, Tyndale's New Testament profoundly influenced many lives. In vain the government of Henry VIII, who was as yet a fervent upholder of the ancient Church, sought to prevent the circulation of the book. It was denounced by the Government and its importation and circulation forbidden. In spite of prohibition, however, it was smuggled into England and passed from hand to hand by an association of 'Christian Brethren.' Some of the 'brethren' of Oxford, where there were many adherents of the New Learning among the students, were imprisoned, and great numbers of copies of Tyndale's Testament were seized and publicly burnt. The most perfect of the few surviving copies is preserved at the Baptist College, Bristol.

Meanwhile, Tyndale continued his labours, working at the translation of the Old Testament into English. At length, however, came the time when he was to set the

seal to his devotion to what he conceived to be the cause of truth by a martyr's death. For some time he had been living quietly in Antwerp, spending some of the time in the house of one Thomas Poyntz, probably a member of the old Gloucestershire family of that name. At Antwerp he was seized, and after an imprisonment of many months brought to trial and condemned to death. Some years before he had written, 'If they shall burn me, they shall do none other thing than that I look for.' The end to which he had thus fearlessly looked forward was in truth to be his, but, with some faint touch of mercy, the persecutors strangled him before his body was burnt at the stake. We are told that just before his death he exclaimed, 'Lord, open the King of England's eyes.'

Tyndale's dying prayer was uttered in 1536, and already Henry VIII had taken the great step of casting off the authority of the Pope of Rome and declaring himself supreme head of the Church. But Tyndale's prayer was doubtless for what he conceived to be the spiritual enlightenment of the king, that he might whole-heartedly renounce what the reformers believed to be the errors of Rome. If so, Tyndale's prayer was not granted. Though the change of headship of the Church is generally considered to mark the Reformation in England, the change, so far as Henry's wishes and designs were concerned, was political rather than religious. The king, already almost all-powerful in the State, intended to be all-powerful in the Church as well. But, able and imperious as Henry was, he could not, in a time of religious revolution, control all the consequences of his act. He would fain have changed the ancient source of spiritual authority while retaining the ancient beliefs and services. This was beyond the power even of the most absolute king that ever sat upon the throne of England. The issue was between those who clung to the ancient authority of Rome and the beautiful services of the Roman Church, and those who disowned that authority and denied its doctrines. Much as Henry disliked it, his action vastly increased the influence of the Reformers amongst whom he must perforce find his instruments.

The breach with Rome, so far as Henry was concerned, sprang immediately from no high motives of policy either in Church or State. His action was governed by his wish to be rid of his elderly wife Catherine of Aragon, whose marriage to himself he, perhaps honestly, believed to be unlawful, in order that he might marry Anne Boleyn. Failing to obtain a divorce from the Pope, Henry had caused the case to be tried in the court of Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury. There the result of the trial was a foregone conclusion; Catherine was divorced and Anne Boleyn became queen.

Shortly after the marriage, Henry and the young and beautiful Queen Anne went upon a stately progress, during which they spent some weeks in our county. As yet, no shadow of the dreadful fate which in a few years was to overtake the fair young queen lay upon her. Everywhere Henry and his bride were welcomed with rejoicings and stately shows and processions. After entering Gloucestershire, they first visited Winchcombe, and the noble pile of Sudeley Castle near by. Thence they passed on to Tewkesbury, then a busy and thriving town famous, as Falstaff reminds us, for the mustard which old Fuller declared to be the best in England. From Tewkesbury they journeyed southwards to Gloucester, and, as they approached the town, the royal pair were met by the Mayor and Aldermen of the town clad in scarlet gowns and wearing their chains of office and attended by a hundred mounted citizens. At the north gate they were joined by the clergy of the city in full vestments, and so the stately procession passed along the gaily decorated streets through lines of cheering citizens to the Abbey. There the king and queen were received by the abbot and his monks. For a week the royal visitors remained in Gloucester, varying the hospitality which the town offered them by hunting in Prinknash Park, the country residence of the abbots of Gloucester, and at Miserden. From Gloucester the royal party continued their journey southward to Berkeley and Thornbury Castles. They had intended to visit Bristol, but, as the plague was raging in the town, they ventured

no nearer than Thornbury. Thither the citizens sent them presents; oxen and sheep for the king, and a silver-gilt cup filled with gold coins for the queen.

Thus, in Henry's progress through Gloucestershire, the Abbey of Gloucester entertained a royal guest, as it had done many times before during the centuries of its existence. But the end of its hospitality was at hand. The growing feeling for reform in the Church and the abuses

Thornbury Castle in 1803

which were alleged to have crept into the religious houses led many to call for their dissolution. Others sought their downfall from less worthy motives. The enormous riches of the great monasteries invited attack not only from those who hoped to share in their plunder, but also from others who honestly believed that their wealth might be better employed in the foundation of colleges and schools, which were now taking the place of the monasteries as the homes of learning.

Within a few years the whole of the monastic houses were dissolved, the monks and nuns driven out into the world and their property seized. Vast sums thus came

into the hands of the Crown. Henry drew up a scheme by which the wealth should largely be devoted to new bishoprics and to the support of colleges. The scheme, however, came to little, but among the six new bishoprics founded, were those of Gloucester and Bristol. The glorious church of the Abbey of St. Peter was thus fortunately preserved to be the cathedral of the new diocese. Similarly St. Augustine's Abbey, Bristol, became the cathedral Church of the Holy Trinity. In both cases, however, the monastic buildings were destroyed. The grey old Norman Abbey Church of Tewkesbury would have perished with the domestic buildings of the monks had not the townsfolk, to their lasting honour, saved the church by a money payment and converted it into a parish church. But in our county many a fair religious house, enriched by the art and craftsmanship of the Middle Ages was utterly broken down and destroyed, its shrines despoiled and defaced, its stones carted away to mend walls or barns, so that to-day but a few moulder-ing columns or arches, at the most, stand to attest its former stately beauty. Such are the ruins of Hailes Abbey near Winchcombe, and of Llanthony Secunda at Gloucester, while the great Abbeys of Winchcombe and Cirencester were utterly destroyed. Flaxley and Kingswood Abbeys, the Priories of Deerhurst and Leonard Stanley, the houses of the Orders of Friars in the chief towns and many other lesser religious houses shared in the general ruin.

Abbot Malvern, of St. Peter's Abbey, Gloucester, deplored in moving words the ruin of the ancient religious house over which he had ruled.

'Having existed for eight hundred years under different forms, in poverty and in wealth, in meanness and in magnificence, in misfortune and in success, it finally succumbed to the royal will. The day came, and that a drear winter day, when its last mass was sung, its last censer waved, its last congregation bent in rapt and lowly adoration before the altar here.' The 'old abbey with its beautiful services, its frequent means of grace,

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its hospitality to strangers, and its loving care for God's poor, had passed away like an early morning dream, and was gone for ever'.

In spite of the king's scheme, only a small part of the wealth of the monasteries went to endow the new bishoprics and seats of learning. Much of it passed into the hands of courtiers and favourites, such as Sir William Kingston, of Painswick, to whose lot fell Flaxley Abbey. Thus arose a class of 'new men', as they were called, whose interests as the owners of former church property were closely bound up with the continuance of the breach with Rome.

CHAPTER XXXIV

RELIGIOUS STRIFE

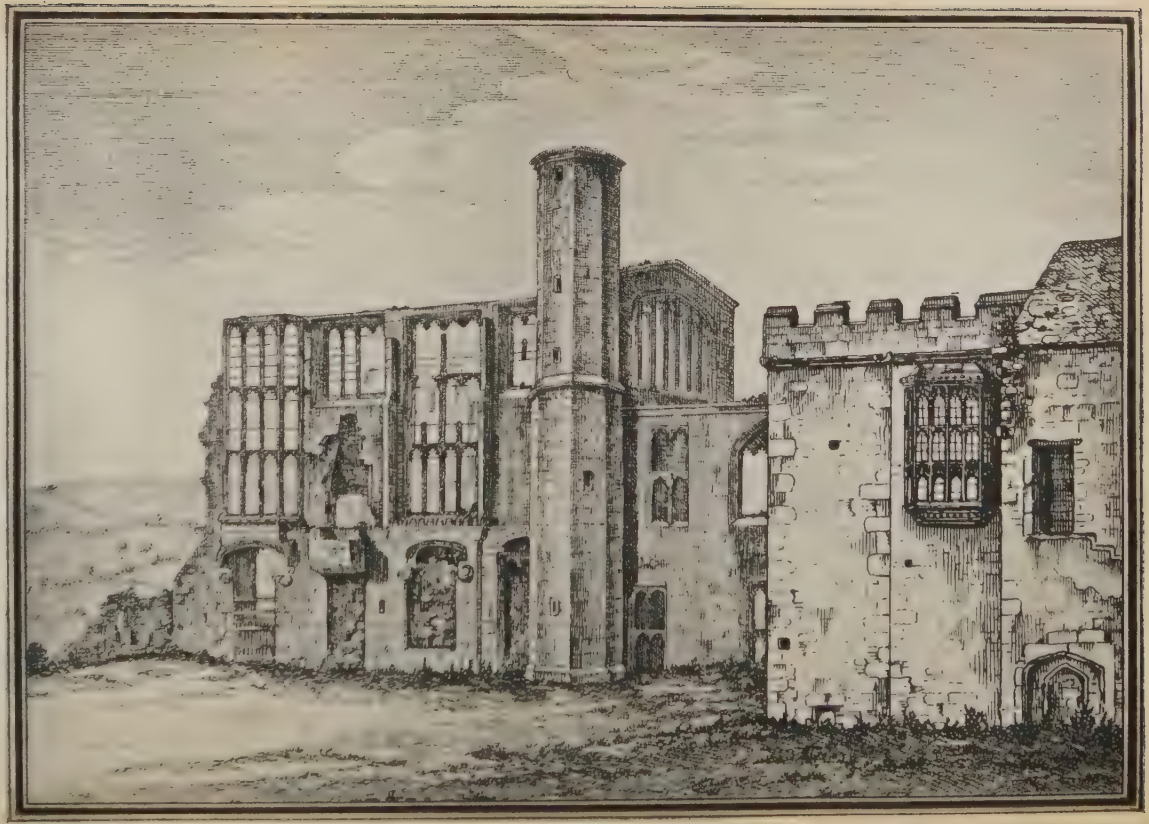
When Henry VIII died his only son, Edward VI, a lad of nine years old, became king. During his short reign the party opposed to the Church of Rome held sway. Some of the reformers were honest in their opposition, but many were influenced by motives of greed and personal ambition rather than by a sense of religious duty. Probably the great majority of the people of England still desired the ancient services and ceremonies of the Church. They had been content enough to agree to the substitution of the king for the Pope as head of the Church, but had little wish for a change of doctrine. The zeal of the reformers, however, supported by the cupidity of those who hoped to profit by the change, took little account of the wishes of the people. The Government of England during the reign of the young king presents an unlovely spectacle of ambition and greed, and of religious narrowness and bitterness.

For the first part of the reign the chief power was in the hands of the king's uncle, the Protector Somerset. The

destruction which had begun with the dissolution of the monasteries was now carried still further. The images of the saints were pulled down in many churches, the wall-paintings defaced, the beautiful stained glass of the windows broken and destroyed. The greed of the Government also led it to seize the vessels of gold or silver, which pious donors in past ages had given to the Church. From Trinity Church in Bristol between four and five hundred ounces of precious metal were seized. The silver was conveyed to the Bristol mint in order to be coined. At Bristol, as at other mints, base money was issued, the controller of the mint for his private gain issuing coins containing only one-third or one-fourth of pure silver. The fraud of the Bristol mint had disastrous results for one of the greatest nobles of the time, Lord Seymour of Sudeley, Lord High Admiral of England, and uncle of the king.

Lord Seymour, after the death of Henry VIII, married Queen Catherine Parr, the widow and sixth wife of Henry. Queen Catherine can scarcely have had a happy life with the king, whose naturally hasty temper was soured by illness during the latter years of his life. Indeed, her life was only preserved by her docility and readiness to accept the king's opinion. The lady had little better fortune as the wife of Lord Seymour and mistress of Sudeley Castle, where her favourite apartment is still to be seen. Her husband treated her with great harshness and brutality. Only a few months after her second marriage she died, not without rumours being spread abroad that she had been poisoned, rumours which have, however, never been proved. Her remains rest under a fair monument raised in recent years in the chapel of Sudeley Castle.

Lord Seymour, a man of violent and ambitious temper, did not long survive. Either from motives of ambition, or from a real sense of the evils of the time, he opposed the Government of his brother, the Protector Somerset. Indeed, he went beyond open opposition, and amongst those with whom he plotted was Sir William Sharington, the fraudulent controller of the Bristol mint. Sharington



agreed to supply Lord Seymour with money to aid him in carrying out his designs, and did, indeed, advance him a large sum. On the other hand, Lord Seymour was to stand a friend to the controller if there were any inquiry into his doings. The plot led to Seymour's ruin. Sharington made a full confession of the whole matter, and the Lord High Admiral was arrested and executed for treason by his brother's orders.

The violent changes of the time, especially in religion, the general misgovernment, and the rise in prices due to the debased coinage, caused great discontent and outbreaks in some parts of the country. The position of affairs in Devon and Cornwall was, indeed, serious for some time. The rising was, however, put down, and Sir Anthony Kingston, of the family enriched by the spoils of the monasteries in Gloucestershire, earned an evil name by the harsh measures he adopted against the rebels.

But, side by side with self-seeking politicians whose support of the change of religion was mainly due to the desire to advance their own interests, nobler influences were at work. Many of the reformers were men of unselfish and devoted lives, though, not unfrequently, their very zeal and intensity of conviction led them into narrowness and bitterness of outlook. Latimer, who as Bishop of Worcester had had charge of Gloucestershire before Henry VIII created the see of Gloucester, was one of the noblest of them. Deprived of his bishopric under Henry VIII he refused to resume it under Edward VI. The homely and familiar eloquence of his sermons and his absolute honesty and courage gave him a powerful influence in spreading the doctrines of the reformers. Hooper, the second bishop of the new diocese of Gloucester, was a reformer of a more austere and narrow type than Latimer, but equally honest in his opinions and courageous in their expression. The time was at hand when the honesty and courage of such men as Latimer and Hooper were to be severely tried.

The short reign of the boy king closed with his early death. Northumberland, who had succeeded to the

power of the Protector Somerset, vainly sought to seat his daughter-in-law, the Lady Jane Grey, upon the throne. The vast majority of the nation declared for Mary, the eldest child of Henry VIII, moved both by the justice of her claim and by disgust at the rapacity and excesses of the late Government.

Mary therefore became queen by almost universal consent. Unfortunately, her character had been soured by the treatment which she and her mother, the divorced Catherine of Aragon, had endured. She was also entirely devoid of the art of gaining the popularity which Henry VIII, in spite of his imperious will and headstrong passions, had enjoyed. Moreover, she was a devout Roman Catholic, looking upon complete reunion with Rome as a religious duty. Further, in spite of the intense dislike of the majority of her subjects to the match, she married Philip II of Spain. In vain a rising led by Sir Thomas Wyatt, in which Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, a member of the old Gloucestershire family of that name, joined, sought to prevent the marriage.

The short reign of Queen Mary is a period of almost unrelieved gloom. She was coldly treated by the husband whom she passionately loved, and was looked upon with growing hatred by a great part of her subjects. Abroad, the national pride received a terrible blow in the loss of Calais, the last remaining vestige of the conquests of Edward III. At home, the worst passions of religious hatred were let loose, and the fires of a terrible persecution left an ineffaceable impression upon the minds of the English people.

Only the heroic constancy with which the persecution was met relieves the gloom of the time with the beauty of devotion and self-sacrifice. Men and women, young men and maidens, most of whom were drawn from the humbler ranks of life, died as bravely for their faith in the doctrines of the Reformers as More and Fisher had died for the doctrine of the ancient Church.

Bishop Hooper was one of the earliest sufferers from the persecution. Soon after Mary became queen he was seized and thrown into the Fleet Prison in London.

He lay there for eighteen months before being brought to trial and condemned to death as a heretic. From London he was brought to Gloucester in order that he might suffer in the city where, in early life, he had lived as a monk, and where, in later life, he had laboured with tireless zeal for the doctrines of the Reformation. The stake was set up in St. Mary's Square hard by the cathedral church. The window over an arched entrance way to the square is still pointed out as the place whence, it is said, his chief persecutors looked out upon his death. His agony was protracted ; the faggots were of green wood, and only after long and terrible pain did his courageous spirit leave the tortured body.

Latimer, so long connected with our county, died in company with Ridley, Bishop of London, at Oxford. His dying words, full of the courage, the wisdom, and homely vigour which marked his character, have impressed themselves deeply on the memory of successive generations. 'Play the man, Master Ridley, we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England as shall never be put out.'

A number of Protestants of humble rank suffered in our county. To his honour be it said, the Catholic bishop whom Mary had appointed to the see of Bristol would take no part in the persecution. Nevertheless, four, or perhaps five, persons were burnt on St. Michael's Hill in the town. Another, whose courage was not equal to the terrible ordeal by fire, recanted, but, filled with remorse, the conscience-stricken wretch drowned himself. Other martyrs died at Cheltenham, at Wotton-under-Edge, at Little Sodbury, and at Newent. Even youth and infirmity could not awaken the pity of the persecutors, and a poor blind boy of Gloucester was among those who suffered for their faith.

Gloucestershire is remarkable among the western counties for the number of its martyrs, a fact which points to a more general acceptance of the reformed doctrines in the county than in the west generally. Possibly this is partly due to the influence of Latimer and Hooper, but, probably, still more to the number

of Gloucestershire people engaged in trade in the sixteenth century, for it was among the trading classes that the reformed doctrines were most readily received.

CHAPTER XXXV

ENGLAND AND SPAIN

The gloom and disaster of the dark days of Queen Mary gave way to a splendid outburst of national vigour and achievement in the reign of her successor. Under Queen Elizabeth, England awoke to a consciousness of her high national destiny and to a courageous confidence in her power. The full consequences of the Revival of Learning made themselves felt, and in nearly every branch of action and thought great men wrought great things for our country. Queen Elizabeth was herself, on the whole, a worthy monarch of the great statesmen, soldiers, sailors, poets, and philosophers who made her reign for ever illustrious in our annals. True, in an age when deceit was the chief weapon of statecraft she met guile with equal guile. But she faced danger for herself and for her country with high-souled courage, and her caution and foresight preserved her throne and kingdom in times of great difficulty and danger. Her personal faults of manner and temper, her inordinate vanity, were as nothing in comparison to her services to her countrymen, who recognized in her the true representative of the reawakened land. The tributes of the great writers of her time to 'Gloriana' were not merely flattery, they recognized the queen's great position as the figurehead of England, the 'fair vestal thronèd by the west', whose heart, following the dictates of her sagacious head, was concerned mainly for her country.

Like her father, Henry VIII, Elizabeth had the art of gaining popularity. She inherited no small share

of his proud imperious spirit, and with it also much of his heartiness of manner and bluffness of speech. Though often in peril of assassination and quite conscious of her danger, her high courage never permitted her to cower in seclusion. She showed herself freely among her people, and gratified at once her own vanity and the popular love of shows and pageants in stately progresses through her kingdom. She passed frequently from castle to castle and from town to town, greeted at each with rejoicings and processions, and with long poetical addresses and displays.

Thus, in 1574, she came to Bristol, and was met at the gate of the city by the mayor and aldermen in their robes of state, and by the trade companies with their banners and ensigns. Through the narrow crowded streets of the town, between the high-gabled, timbered houses, gay with banners and hangings, the townsmen conducted the queen to the High Cross, where a boy, dressed as Fame, welcomed her in a poetical speech. Further on Salutation and Gratulation made other speeches, and Obedient Good-will was to have done likewise but time pressed, or the queen was impatient, and so Good-will's speech remained undelivered. Then the queen was brought to her lodging in the great house of one of the merchants. As she entered soldiers fired their muskets, and the guns of the castle and the city walls thundered forth an answering salute. All this, however, was but a prelude to the great show the city had arranged for its royal mistress. Two forts had been built in the river and a mock siege of these took place; interspersed, in the manner of such displays, with many speeches. The pageant lasted two, or perhaps three, days, and was 'very costly and chargeable, especially in gunpowder'.

Another day the queen and her suite, in three splendid galleys, went down the river and passed among the crowded shipping of the harbour. The evidence of the wealth and commerce of the second port of her kingdom may well have afforded her more solid satisfaction than the mimic siege and the long speeches of the pageant.

It was, indeed, upon the skill and courage of her sailors

that the fate of queen and kingdom was to depend. While Elizabeth was viewing the shipping in Bristol harbour, events were already shaping themselves towards a life-and-death struggle with Spain. Already, too, the man who was above all others to be the scourge of Spain and the revealer to England of her destiny upon the ocean, had served his apprenticeship to the sea. Drake had suffered from the Spaniards in the West Indies, and had served some time in the queen's fleet, probably under Sir William Wynter. Within a few years he was to startle the world with feats of daring and seamanship, exploits which made the name of 'El Draco' feared from Cadiz to Panama, and from Panama to Manilla.

A spirit similar to that of Drake animated lesser men. When Andrew Barker, a merchant of Bristol who traded with the Canaries, had goods valued at £1,700 seized, he trusted to himself for redress. Fitting out two ships, the *Bear* and the *Ragged Staff*, he sailed to the Spanish Main, plundered Spanish settlements, and captured a frigate. England and Spain were at the time nominally at peace, but already there was no peace between the sailors of the two nations upon the Western Ocean and the waters of the Spanish Main.

Sir William Wynter, of Lydney, in our county, holds an honoured place among the great seamen of the Elizabethan age. The son of a merchant and sea-captain of Bristol, he served his country afloat for nearly half a century. Moreover, two of his sons and a nephew played notable parts in the naval history of the time. His nephew, John Wynter, was in command of the *Elizabeth*, one of the little fleet under the command of Drake which, in 1577, set out upon the most memorable voyage in the history of English seamanship, the circumnavigation of the globe. Off the Straits of Magellan, however, the ships were driven apart, and one of them, the *Marygold*, went down with all hands. After endeavouring for a month to make a passage into the Pacific in face of a continuous storm, Wynter gave up his consort as lost and returned home. Thus he lost his share in the glory of following Drake's furrow round the world.

Edward, the eldest son of Sir William Wynter, sailed with Drake in his expedition of 1585–6 against the Spanish West Indies. His brother, named William after his father, sailed in command of the *Foresight* with the same admiral in 1587, in the famous expedition to Cadiz in which Drake 'singed the King of Spain's beard'.

The insults of the English seamen to King Philip's possessions in the New World, their plunder of his commerce, and the support given by England to his revolted subjects in the Netherlands, had made it clear, even to Philip's slow-moving mind, that the island-kingdom must be crushed if his plans were to succeed. When Mary Queen of Scots died by the executioner's axe, Philip resolved to use all the resources of his vast possessions for an invasion of England upon a gigantic scale. Ships, arms, and great stores of provisions were collected at the chief ports of his dominions. His preparations, however, were thrown out of gear, and the sailing of his fleet delayed for a whole year by Drake's astounding feat of 1587, in which the younger William Wynter shared. Sailing into Cadiz harbour Drake burnt and scuttled the ships and destroyed stores and ammunition, in spite of the Spanish war-galleys and the fortresses of the port. Then, for a time, he insulted the Spanish coasts, and lay off the mouth of the Tagus in the hope that the Spanish admiral would come out to fight him. Our county can claim some connexion with the great name of Drake from the fact that for some time he lived at Gatcombe. A house near the entrance to the Severn Tunnel is still pointed out as his.

The attempt at invasion, which the exploit of 1587 had delayed, was made in the following year. The great Armada, fondly called 'Invincible', entered the Channel and sailed eastward to take on board the army which, under the Duke of Parma, was to conquer our country. From Plymouth Harbour the English fleet issued to hang upon the Spaniards and fight a running fight up the Channel. Its ships, more seaworthy and better handled than the sea-castles of Spain, chose their own conditions of attack. Avoiding close action with the Spanish fleet, they cut off stragglers and 'plucked the Spanish feathers one by

one' as the Armada laboured slowly up Channel. Meanwhile, from every English port and harbour ships came out to join the fleet and share in the fight. Three ships of Bristol, the *Great Unicorn*, the *Minion*, and the *Handmaid*, and a pinnace, the *Aid*, sailed in that glorious fleet, while the people of Gloucester and Tewkesbury sent the barque *Sutton*.

At length the Spanish fleet, sorely harassed but still formidable, cast anchor off Calais. Though the English had had the advantage in the long running fight up the Channel the danger to England was still great. Parma's army of veterans, the most formidable troops in Europe, were close at hand. At all costs the Spanish ships must be dislodged. A council of war was held on board Lord Howard's flagship, anchored in sight of the Spanish fleet. Thither came the veteran admiral, Sir William Wynter, who forty-four years before had fought his first fight in the fleet that burnt Leith. His eldest son, Edward, Drake's companion of 1585–6, was also an officer in the fleet watching the Spanish ships.

The old admiral, Wynter, fully realized the need of driving the Spaniards from their anchorage before Parma's troops could be taken on board. He proposed that in the dead of night fireships should be sent in amongst the huddled crowd of Spanish warships, and his advice was adopted by the council of war. The night was moonless, and, when the darkness was blackest, eight English vessels, filled with all kinds of combustibles, suddenly blazed out into flame, and, driven by wind and tide, bore down upon the enemy. At once a terrible panic seized the Spaniards. The cables of their ships were cut, and in wild confusion, all sense of order lost, the vessels stood out to gain the open sea. Not one of the Spaniards was burnt by the fireships, but panic had destroyed the unity of their fleet, and when day dawned the Spanish ships were seen by the English commanders to be standing in disorderly groups to the north-east. At once the English ships weighed anchor and stood out in pursuit. Off Gravelines they engaged the Spaniards, who had been unable thoroughly to reform their order

of battle, in the decisive action of the long-drawn fight. Here Sir William Wynter played a brilliant part. The time for action at long range was past, the capture of straggling ships was of no importance. The Spanish fleet must be decisively beaten and driven off the coast. Otherwise it was still possible that it might be able to fulfil its main object of carrying the troops of Parma to the shores of England. Hence a desperate attack was delivered at close range. Sir William Wynter received the Spanish shot in silence, and his guns made no answer till, at a range of six-score paces, they opened in a shattering broadside. His ship alone fired five hundred shot in the action.

The battle of Gravelines decided the fate of the expedition. Driven from the shelter of a friendly port, the Spaniards stood out into the North Sea. Adverse winds and the rough handling they had received rendered return by way of the Channel impossible. They were forced to stand northwards, hoping to round the North of Scotland and so escape homewards. Drake and others followed their flying squadrons until lack of ammunition fortunately forced them to give up the pursuit. For as the defeated Armada struggled through the stormy waters of the Western Ocean the fury of the heavens fell upon the battered hulls. Ship after ship went ashore on the rock-bound coasts of the Hebrides and the West of Ireland, where their crews perished miserably from the fury of the waves or at the hands of the half-savage natives. Only a scanty remnant of the proud fleet, shattered by storm and shot, ever found shelter in the harbours of Spain.

The great fight had saved England from invasion. Her soldiers, who had gathered at the call of clanging bell and flaring beacon, were not required to try conclusions with the seasoned troops of Spain. It had, however, done more, for it had shown England the true source of her strength and had dealt a terrible blow to the power of Spain. Henceforth no odds were too great for English sailors to attack. The spirit of Drake was infused into all. In 1596, the very year in which he died in the

Spanish Main, the English fleet, under Howard, Raleigh, and Essex, sailed into the harbour of Cadiz, and under the muzzles of the guns of the forts captured or destroyed all the ships of the Spanish fleet lying there. John Hopkins, twice mayor of Bristol city, sailed his own ship, and greatly distinguished himself in the English fleet which accomplished this wonderful feat of arms. No wonder that his fellow citizens welcomed him in triumph home, with ringing of bells and blaze of illuminations in the windows and a ' greate bonfire at High Crosse '.

CHAPTER XXXVI

EARLY STUART TIMES

The struggle against Spain and the great qualities and personal popularity of Queen Elizabeth had kept England, in the main, united during the queen's reign. There had, however, not been wanting signs during her latter years that Parliament would not much longer be content with the limited powers allowed it by the imperious Tudors. Moreover, the extreme Protestant, or Puritan, party was growing in strength. Both in politics and religion events during the reign of James I were shaping themselves towards the great conflict between the royal authority and the power of Parliament and between the Church of England and Puritanism, which is known as the Great Rebellion.

James I, learned without wisdom, and obstinate in insisting upon his ' divine right ', was ill qualified to avert the threatened dangers. Opposition to the Crown gathered strength during his reign. Moreover, his personal qualities, his slovenliness and ungainliness, his timorous spirit and lack of dignity, contrasted unfavourably with such splendid figures as Henry VIII and Elizabeth.

One great achievement beyond the seas, the fruit of

the daring of the Elizabethan sailors and adventurers, was accomplished during the reign. The first successful colonization of Virginia in 1607 marks the beginning of the over-sea empire of Britain. Later, in 1620, Puritan exiles founded the first colony in New England. The gradual development of the American colonies was of great importance to Bristol, as much of their trade passed through the port. The tobacco of Virginia, the sugar of the West Indies, the furs and fish of New England and Newfoundland, added enormously to the value of the commerce of the town. Even before the attempts at colonization succeeded Bristol merchants had attempted the task. The town bore, too, a considerable share in the development of the New England colonies. The colonists in Massachusetts, when on the verge of starvation, in 1631, were rescued by a Bristol ship, the *Lion*. Next year the captain of the *Lion* took over a hundred and twenty-three more settlers, probably chiefly Bristol folk, to join the colonists. Quite a number of new 'Bristols' sprang up in America.

In Newfoundland, too, the people of Bristol founded settlements. Under a charter granted by James I to the 'Company of Adventurers and Planters of the Cities of London and Bristol' a body of settlers from Bristol established themselves in the island and settled a considerable area. From 1610, the year of this settlement under John Guy, merchant and sometime mayor of Bristol, dates the permanent British colonization of Newfoundland.

The name of James's Bay, the southern end of Hudson Bay, commemorates an expedition sent out by the Bristol merchants in 1631 during the reign of Charles I, under Thomas James, in the hope of discovering the north-west passage to India.

The settlement of America, however, is but little, if at all, to the credit of James I and his Government. Indeed, the most enduring and resolute of the colonists, the Puritans of New England, were fugitives from oppression; though in justice it must be allowed that they were themselves no less intolerant than their oppressors.

In England itself the forces of discontent gradually gathered strength. But while Puritanism, which in many cases frowned upon even the most innocent amusements as sinful, became more powerful, there were not wanting those who sought to keep alive the old English love of outdoor sports and merry-making. During the reign of James, the famous 'Cotswold Games' were made into a regular gathering by one Robert Dover, who lived under the shadow of the Northern Cotswolds.

The games themselves had existed long before Dover's time. The open unenclosed hill lands, and the clear air that sweeps across them are of a nature to invite to field sports of all kinds. Shakespeare doubtless knew the Cotswold Games well, and rode or walked to view them from his home at Stratford.

> How does your fallow greyhound, Sir? I heard
> Say, he was out-run on Cotsale,

says Slender in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Indeed, good evidence has been adduced to show that Shakespeare dwelt for a time in Gloucestershire. References in *The Merry Wives* and in other plays prove, at any rate, that he had an intimate local knowledge of places in the county. Drayton, too, pictures the rustic merry-making upon the hills; the flag inscribed 'Heigh for Cotswold' planted on the hill summit, around which the swains danced to the music of pipe and tabor; the rustic feast spread upon the short sweet herbage of the uplands.

> The shepherds' king,
> Whose flock hath chanced that year the earliest lamb to bring,
> In his gay baldrick sits at his low grassy board,
> With flawns, lards, clowted cream, and country dainties stored;
> And whilst the bagpipe plays, each lusty jocund swain
> Quaffs sillibubs in cans to all upon the plain,
> And to their country girls, whose nosegays they do wear,
> Some roundelays do sing; the rest the burthen bear.

THE COTSWOLD GAMES

Out of these rustic gatherings, Dover organized a great annual meeting for field sports of all kinds which attracted no small attention at the time. Indeed, King James himself countenanced the scheme and presented Dover with a suit of clothes to be worn upon the great annual occasion. The sports took place at Whitsuntide upon 'Dover's Hill', about one mile from Campden, in North Gloucestershire. So famous were the games that a volume containing over thirty poems in their honour and in praise of their founder was published, and no less persons than Ben Jonson, Michael Drayton, and Thomas Heywood joined the chorus. Rare Ben Jonson felt himself unable to award the palm of merit

'Twixt Cotswold and the Olympic exercise,

but was very sure of the good wrought by the games.

How they advance true love, and neighbourhood
And do both church and commonwealth the good—
In spite of hypocrites who are the worst
Of subjects; let such envy till they burst.

Ben Jonson, it is plain, was no friend of the Puritans, to whom he here refers as 'hypocrites'.

Evidently the strict Puritans looked askance at Dover and his Cotswold sports, for the founder of the merry-making himself says:

I've heard our fine refined clergy teach,
Of the commandments, that it is a breach
To play at any game for gain or coin.

. . . . . .

And man with man their activeness to try
Forbidden is—much harm doth come thereby.

The worthy sportsman goes on to argue that such teaching, while destroying active sports, will drive 'our spriteful youth' to 'the pipe and pot'.

Certainly the rough quaint old woodcut to the volume containing the poems depicts sports innocent enough and

much preferable to the pipe and pot of the alehouse. It shows the wooden castle, known as Dover's Castle, which was each year erected on the summit of the hill, and from which guns were fired, doubtless to the great delight of the younger merry-makers.

> Thy castle shall exceed as far
> The other Dover, as sweet peace doth war,

sang one of his poets. Dover appears, too, mounted and wearing the suit he had of King James, and a plumed hat. By right of his eminence as master of the sports, he is drawn far larger than any other figure in the woodcut. The drawing shows, also, the tents for the gentry who came to the sports ; the feasters seated at their repast,

> None ever hungry from these games come home,
> Or e'er make plaint of viands or of room.

It depicts, too, the maidens dancing, the cudgel-playing, dog-coursing, wrestling, horse-racing, quarter-staff play, hammer-throwing and the other jolly sports of the great gathering.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE GATHERING STORM

In his dealings with foreign countries King James reversed the policy of the reign of Elizabeth. To the disgust of his subjects, who had profited by the plunder of Spanish ships and settlements, he sought the friendship of Spain. He even, to his lasting shame, sacrificed Sir Walter Raleigh to the hatred of the Spaniards. Nevertheless, through the influence of his favourite the Duke of Buckingham and his son Prince Charles, war with Spain was imminent when he died in 1625. The unhappy reign of Charles I opened with the Spanish War, from which the nation derived neither profit nor

glory. But an old ballad, 'The Honour of Bristol,' records one triumphant fight of a Bristol ship against great odds—a fight which probably occurred during this war. It recounts how the *Angel Gabriel*, a 'lusty ship of Bristol, sailed out adventurously'. Attacked by three Spanish vessels, 'of warlike trim and might,' the *Angel Gabriel* fought so resolutely that she drove off the enemy with great loss, while she herself suffered but little.

With that their three ships boarded us
Again with might and main,
But still our noble Englishmen
Cry'd out 'A fig for Spain!'
Though seven times they boarded us
At last we showed our skill
And made them feel what men we were
On the *Angel Gabriel.*

Seven hours this fight continued;
So many men lay dead,
With Spanish blood for fathoms round
The sea was coloured red.
Five hundred of their fighting men
We then outright did kill,
And many more were hurt and maimed
By the *Angel Gabriel.*

But such fights, however gallant, were mere episodes without effect upon the result of the war. So far as the king's Government was concerned, the war was an utter failure, and the complete ineffectiveness of a great expedition against Cadiz was a sorry contrast to the great exploits of Drake, and of Raleigh and Essex. The war, however, involved heavy expense, and the king's need of money was increased by a war with France, which was equally unsuccessful and inglorious in its results. The need for money, the king's illegal methods of raising it, and the unpopularity of the king's favourite, the Duke of Buckingham, led to constant quarrels between the king and his first three Parliaments.

A spirited protest on the part of the third Parliament of Charles against the illegal levying of taxes led to its dissolution in 1629.

Thenceforward for eleven years Charles ruled as an absolute monarch. Peace was made with Spain and France, and, relieved of the pressure of war expenditure, the king and his ministers contrived to raise enough money to carry on the Government. The means, however, which they adopted were frequently illegal, frequently harsh and unwise. Moreover, the oppression of the Puritans added the bitterness born of religious intolerance to the political enmity which a great body of Englishmen felt for the king's Government.

At length Charles and his adviser, Archbishop Laud, committed a crowning act of folly by endeavouring to force the religious system of the Church of England upon the Scottish people. The Scots rose in revolt, and Charles, to meet the emergency, was forced to call a Parliament in 1640. It proved less pliable than Charles wished, and in a few weeks it was dissolved. Soon after the Scots crossed the Tweed and defeated the king's half-hearted army. Sorely against his will, Charles was forced once more to call a Parliament to his assistance, and in November, 1640, the most famous of English Parliaments met.

In the Long Parliament, so called because in one form or another it lasted until 1660, events moved rapidly towards revolution. At length, in 1642, angered beyond endurance at the opposition of the Puritan party, the king went in person to arrest five of its leaders in the House of Commons. He did not find them there. In response to his question as to their whereabouts, Speaker Lenthall, the Recorder of Gloucester, told the king that he could not speak but what the House should order him to say. 'The birds had flown,' as Charles himself said, and so had all hopes of a peaceable settlement between king and Parliament. From that time the appeal was to the sword, and both sides busied themselves with preparations for the conflict.

From the king there came commands to the Lord-Lieutenant of Gloucestershire, Lord Chandos of Sudeley,

to raise forces for his service, while from Parliament came conflicting orders to put the trained bands or militia of the county under their control. Lord Chandos was a Royalist and therefore endeavoured to obey the king's commands. He summoned the Royalists to meet him at Cirencester. But the inhabitants of the little town were violent partisans of the Parliament. They assailed Lord Chandos so fiercely that he escaped with difficulty out of the town.

In the main the feeling which the people of Cirencester has thus shown was representative of that of the people of the two chief Gloucestershire towns, Bristol and Gloucester. The commercial towns had suffered severely from the arbitrary rule of Charles. Moreover, they were the chief strongholds of Puritanism. Hence they were, in most cases, on the side of the Parliament. Gloucester especially was a Puritan town. In Bristol, perhaps, opinions were more equally divided.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE GREAT REBELLION; EARLY DAYS

Soon after the outbreak of war the king fixed his head-quarters at Oxford. The royal army was thus within striking distance of the Puritan towns in Gloucestershire. Early in 1643, Prince Rupert led a raiding expedition across the Cotswolds and summoned Cirencester to surrender. The prince, however, departed without any serious attempt to capture the town, and his army passed on without doing more than seize provisions and destroy stores of corn and hay in the surrounding villages. The threatened attack led the townsfolk to strengthen their defences and the garrison of the town was increased. But, as no attack was delivered, a part of the garrison of Cirencester, together with troops from Gloucester and Tewkesbury, marched to attack Sudeley

Castle, the home of the Royalist Lord Chandos. The castle was held by a small garrison, but its owner was absent, fighting in the king's forces. Only a feeble resistance was made, and after the attacking party had planted cannon in position to bombard the defences, the Royalists surrendered. The castle was then garrisoned by the troops from Cirencester. The garrison of that town itself was thus considerably weakened and Prince Rupert took the opportunity to attack it. He appeared before Sudeley Castle, apparently with the intention of attempting its recapture. Instead of doing so, however, he passed on, and being joined by reinforcements from Oxford, besieged Cirencester. The Royalists attacked the defences at three separate points at noon.

At the top of Cicely Hill, near the place where the entrance from Cirencester to Earl Bathurst's Park is now situated, the Royalists broke through the outer defences of the town. They were then joined by others of their party, and together the king's men forced their way through the barricades, to which the defenders had retreated, and drove the enemy into the market-place. The town was now won, for the Puritan soldiers who had maintained their positions successfully at the other points of attack were taken in the rear. Though some still fought stubbornly, but unavailingly, in fortified houses and at barricades, by four o'clock the town was in the hands of the Royalists. Some twelve hundred prisoners were shut up in the parish church, and the town was held for the king by a Royalist garrison under Sir Ralph Dutton.

Meanwhile, Bristol was garrisoned for the Parliament by troops under Nathaniel Fiennes, an able politician but no soldier, as governor.

Although the majority of the townsfolk of Bristol favoured the cause of the Parliament there was an active section of Royalists. A number of the more daring of these formed a plot by which they hoped to put the town into the hands of their party. It was arranged that Prince Rupert with an army should appear before the town, and that certain dissatisfied officers of the

garrison should, on a night when they would be in command of one of the guard-houses, open the gate and also seize the guard at another entrance to the city. This done, the bells of three churches were to clang out together, and at the signal the Royalists in the town were to rise, the troops of Prince Rupert were to pour in and the city was thus to be taken by surprise.

All was in readiness, Prince Rupert with 6,000 troops was encamped on Durdham Down, and the Royalists of the town were assembled in the houses of the chief conspirators, when the plot was discovered. The defences were manned and the scheme failed utterly. Some of the conspirators escaped in boats, but most of them were captured.

The leaders, Robert Yeomans and George Boucher, were tried by court martial and sentenced to death. Though many of his own party sought to dissuade him, Fiennes determined to carry out the sentence. To add to the cruelty of the execution, the unfortunate Loyalists were hung in front of Yeomans' own house and their dying prayers were interrupted by the insults of a Puritan preacher.

Meanwhile, a Royalist army raised in Wales under Lord Herbert had crossed the Wye, advanced into Gloucestershire and entrenched itself at the village of Highnam, just outside the city of Gloucester. There was thus a danger to the party of the Parliament that the town might be completely invested by another Royalist army acting in conjunction with Lord Herbert's force and establishing itself on the eastern bank of the Severn.

The threatening state of affairs brought the chief commander of the forces of the Parliament in the south-west of England, the high-souled Sir William Waller, into Gloucestershire. He advanced to Bristol and thence made his way into Wiltshire, where he took Malmesbury. By his night-marches Waller earned the name of the 'night-hawk', while his successes caused the adherents of the Parliament to call him 'William the Conqueror'. His rapidity of movement and his success in Gloucestershire justified the names.

From Malmesbury he marched into our county, crossed the Cotswolds, and passed through the Stroud Valley to the banks of the Severn. At Framilode he crossed the river in boats. Once on the Forest of Dean side of the Severn he was only a few miles from the rear of Lord Herbert's force.

Meanwhile the Welshmen had been kept busily occupied by the Gloucester garrison. Its commander, the deputy-governor of the city, was Colonel Massey, a skilful soldier who had seen much service in the wars in Germany. Though Massey was a soldier of fortune he had a high sense of military honour and, having engaged himself on the side of the Parliament, he fought their battle with indomitable energy and great military skill. He was fully informed of Waller's movements, and, while Lord Herbert was still ignorant of the foe ready to pounce upon his rear, the Gloucester garrison delivered another of the many attacks which had kept the Royalists busy in their entrenchments at Highnam. While Lord Herbert's men were hard pressed by this attack on their front Waller came up on their rear. They broke and fled and suffered severely in the pursuit by Waller's horsemen. A monument at Barber's Bridge marks the site where nearly a hundred skeletons of those who sought to escape by the ford across the Leadon were unearthed in the middle of the last century.

After this success, Waller marched through the Forest of Dean and along the valley of the Wye and reduced a number of places on his way. In spite of a force under the king's nephew, Prince Maurice, sent to intercept his return through the Forest, he brought his horsemen safely back to Gloucester, having previously sent his artillery and foot across the Severn at Aust Passage.

CHAPTER XXXIX

CAPTURE OF BRISTOL BY THE ROYALISTS

The failure of the Royalist plot at Bristol and the victories of Waller in our county took place in the early months of the year 1643. During the summer of the same year, however, the royal forces achieved such notable successes that the chances of war inclined strongly to their side. In our own county the great Royalist triumph was the capture of Bristol, the second commercial city of the kingdom. The way to the successful siege of the city was opened by a Royalist victory at Roundaway Down. There Sir William Waller was overthrown by an antagonist as high-souled as himself, Sir Ralph Hopton, who before the curse of civil war had fallen on the land had been his close friend. The victory made a successful attack upon Bristol possible. The Royalists were joined by a force from Oxford under Prince Rupert and the town was invested on Sunday, July 23. The Prince took up his quarters near Clifton Church on the Gloucestershire side of the city, while his brother, Prince Maurice, was stationed on the Somersetshire side.

On the Wednesday following the investment of the town the Royalists attacked six places in the defences at the same time. The pre-arranged assaults, however, failed. On the south side, the Royalists at all points were driven back with heavy loss. On the north, some of the fiercest fighting took place round Prior's Hill Fort, which was defended by Blake, afterwards the great admiral of the Commonwealth. Twice the fort was assaulted by the Royalists under the gallant Lord Grandison. Twice driven back, Grandison again led them to the attack. In the ditch in front of the defences a party of the garrison fell upon them. A fierce hand-to-hand fight ensued. Lord Grandison was mortally wounded and his men again repulsed.

In another quarter, however, the king's forces achieved

a decisive success. Colonel Washington, a member of the family from which the great hero of the American rebellion sprang, had been told off with three hundred men to guard some Royalist stores. Viewing the defences, he marked as a weak spot the hollow situated between Prior's Hill Fort and Brandon Hill. By a gross blunder on the part of Fiennes, this naturally weak spot was weakly held, for it was defended by a fort which appears to have been unfinished, and which certainly was without guns. Moreover, as events proved, it was under the command of an officer of no resolution. Against this weak point Washington led his men with 'fire-pikes' blazing as they advanced. Panic seized the defenders and they fled without offering any resistance. The Royalists at once prepared the way for the entrance of their comrades, and, when their success became known, the cavalry of Prince Rupert poured through the breach. Through the narrow streets they fought their way, though numbers of them fell, killed or wounded by shots from the houses, until practically the whole of the town between the northern defences and the River Frome was in their hands.

Meanwhile some two hundred of the women of Bristol had barricaded the Frome Gate and besought the governor, Fiennes, to maintain the fight in the inner town. They offered, we are told, to stand with their children in front of the enemy's fire if the men of the garrison were afraid. Fiennes, however, believed that further resistance was hopeless. The Royalists were preparing to wade across the Frome, which was at low tide, and continued resistance meant fierce and bloody fighting in the streets of the city. Moreover, he believed that the street-fighting would be only useless carnage. Probably he was right, the position of the town made it incapable of defence when once the outer fortifications were pierced. He surrendered to Prince Rupert on condition that the troops of the Parliament were allowed to march out of the town, and the prince gladly accepted the terms.

For some time, however, the commanders of the forts

on Prior's Hill and Brandon Hill, to whom the surrender was unknown, continued to defend their charges obstinately. Indeed, Prince Rupert is said to have threatened Blake with hanging, for continuing the fight after his commander had surrendered.

The victorious Royalists lost heavily in the assault and in the street-fighting. A number of their best officers besides Lord Grandison, who could 'never be enough lamented' says the historian Clarendon, and some five hundred of the very flower of their foot-soldiers were killed.

But the capture of the great and wealthy city was worth almost any sacrifice to the Royalists. The resources of the town were of enormous importance to a party which had depended largely for the replenishment of its war chest upon the loyal gentlemen who poured their private fortunes into the royal treasury and melted down their family plate for the king's service.

During the time that Prince Rupert held Bristol as governor for the king with Sir Ralph Hopton, ennobled for his services, as his lieutenant, the city was taxed almost to the verge of ruin. Moreover, Bristol served the king as one of the channels through which he, unwisely, drew Irish recruits for his army.

But the taking of Bristol, coupled with successes in the north of England, held out further pleasing prospects to the king. He hoped to effect the capture of Gloucester which would give him full command of the Severn, for Worcester and Shrewsbury were already in his hands. This would permit of a simultaneous advance of the Royalists from west and north upon London, and its capture would mean the complete victory of the king. But, that no hostile garrison might be left in the rear, the king's officers decided that Gloucester must be taken as a first and essential step to an advance upon the capital. Hence the siege of Gloucester was fraught with the gravest issues. It was the very crisis of the early part of the Great Rebellion.

CHAPTER XL

THE SIEGE OF GLOUCESTER

When King Charles, after considerable debate and indecision, decided to defer the attack upon London until after the reduction of Gloucester, he was no doubt influenced by the opinion that the capture of the Puritan city was an easy task. The Royalists, elated with their successes, believed that Gloucester could be taken in a few days, and would be in their hands long before the Parliament could muster and dispatch troops to its aid. The siege would thus, they thought, only delay by a few days their triumphant march upon the capital, while their position would be greatly strengthened by the command of the Severn and the road to South Wales, from which they drew so many of their infantry recruits. Moreover, there would be no Puritan garrison to harry and plunder the Royalist estates in Gloucestershire and the neighbouring counties. 'Bristol taking, Exeter shaking, Gloucester quaking,' said a Royalist rhymester in reference to the strongholds of the Parliament in the west.

Nor were the Royalists alone in the opinion that Gloucester must fall in a few days. Fiennes, smarting under his failure to hold Bristol, declared that Gloucester could not hold out two days. The Puritan divine, Corbet, who went through the siege and afterwards wrote its history, said that 'Gloucester did stand without help and hope'. In London, the position of affairs was viewed by the Parliament with the gravest anxiety and alarm.

But Royalist hopes and Puritan fears alike left out of account the stubborn and resolute spirit of the people of the 'godly city of Gloucester' and the remarkable military abilities and energy of its governor. To this office Colonel Massey, who in the early part of the war had been deputy-governor of the town, had, fortunately

for the cause of the Parliament, been promoted. He was a soldier by profession and had no very deep interest in the religious and political quarrel from which the Civil War arose. Indeed, it is said that in the first place he offered his services to the king on the outbreak of the war, but entered the service of the Parliament because it offered him more favourable terms. Lord Clarendon, the Royalist historian of the Great Rebellion, also tells us that, shortly before the siege, Massey was in secret treaty with one of the king's officers for the surrender of the city. However that may have been, Massey, before the siege opened, had made up his mind to defend the city to the utmost, and, as events proved, he fulfilled his trust with wonderful energy and resource. He was nobly seconded by the citizens. Fully conscious of their danger, they nevertheless went about the task of strengthening the defences of the city calmly and with full confidence that they were fighting the battle of the Lord. Harsh and unlovely in its attitude to the gentler graces of life, the Puritan faith steeled men to high endurance and to a scorn of danger and bodily suffering. In the crisis of the struggle, with the king's armies triumphant in the north and west, and with Bristol fallen, the people of Gloucester gave the first triumphant evidence of the stern, resolute, and enduring spirit of Puritanism, which, under the leadership of Cromwell, was soon to crush the generous loyalty and devotion of the king's Cavaliers.

We see vividly the stern unbending character of the Puritans, and the Cavaliers' attitude towards their ungracious bearing, in Lord Clarendon's account of the Gloucester citizens who brought back a reply to the summons of King Charles to surrender the town. On the 10th of August, with an advanced army of six thousand men, the king appeared before the hastily repaired walls of the city. Early in the afternoon, he sent two heralds with a trumpeter to summon the city to surrender and to demand an answer within two hours. Before that time had elapsed, Gloucester sent its answer. There 'returned two citizens from the town, with lean, pale, sharp, and bad visages. . . . The men, without

View of Gloucester in 1830, from Robin's Wood Hill

any circumstance of duty, or good manners, in a pert, shrill, undismayed accent, said "they had brought an answer from the godly city of Gloucester to the king", and were so ready to give insolent and seditious answers to any question, as if their business were chiefly to provoke the king to violate his own safe-conduct.'

The sour-visaged messengers brought a written reply to the king's demand, signed by the mayor, aldermen, and some of the citizens of the town, and by the governor and some of the officers of the garrison. Though the answer kept up the fiction that the defenders of the city were holding the place for the king, it absolutely refused the surrender demanded. 'We do keep this city according to our oaths and allegiance, to and for the use of his Majesty, and his royal posterity: and do accordingly conceive ourselves wholly bound to obey the commands of his Majesty, signified by both Houses of Parliament: and are resolved by God's help to keep this city accordingly.'

The king's army, therefore, sat down to besiege the town and Charles himself took up his quarters at Matson House, at the foot of Robin's Wood Hill. The conduct of the siege was entrusted mainly to General Ruthven, while the cavalry, under the fiery Prince Rupert, was chiefly employed in plundering and foraging expeditions. The horsemen, indeed, were of little use in the actual conduct of the siege. The cavalier gentlemen and their servants were ready enough for foray or charge, but shirked the rough, hard spade-work in the trenches.

Soon after the siege began, the army of Charles was increased by important reinforcements, and then formed the largest combined force which the Royalists had brought into the field up to that time. The garrison was comparatively small in number, some 1,500 men.

The ancient defences of the town were broken down in many places, but, in preparation for the siege, the citizens had repaired them and added earthworks in places. The stores of food were ample, but there was a very serious deficiency in the supply of gunpowder. When the siege began, there were but fifty barrels in the

magazine. This scanty store, however, was supplemented by a powder-mill which made about three barrels a week.

Immediately after the city had returned its refusal to the king's summons to surrender, Massey set fire to the houses in the suburbs and parts of the town outside the city-walls in order that they might not afford shelter to the besiegers. Nearly two hundred and fifty houses were thus destroyed; the city, said one of the besieged, was like a garment without skirts which 'we were willing to part with all, lest our enemies should sit upon them'.

On August 11, after a night of pouring rain, so heavy that in the morning a thick mist enshrouded both besiegers and besieged, the Royalists began digging their first entrenchments, at a spot near the present position of the Spa, and at a distance of about a musket shot from the walls. Thence the lines of the camp and the trenches were extended until the town was hemmed in upon all sides. Guns were mounted and a vigorous bombardment of the city walls was entered upon, without in general any very great injury either to the defences of the town or to the persons of the garrison. Indeed, some of the entries in the diary which the town clerk kept during the siege are not without a touch of humour. Thus we are told that on Saturday, August 19, 'the enemy began a most furious battery upon both sides of the city wall next Rignall style, making above 150 great shot thereupon'. But the shot, though it shrewdly battered the wall, made no impression upon the earthworks and the only casualties were a 'man and a maid hurt' and a 'pigge' killed; 'a cannon ball, its force being almost spent, running along the ground, struck down a pigge, which our soldiers ate, and afterwards well jeered the enemy therewith.' Again, on the 24th, two newly mounted pieces of ordnance fired many shots 'but did little hurt and killed none. One bullet of about 20lb. weight came through a chamber of the inn called the Crown, carried a bolster before it into the window and there slept upon it'.

The record of the siege is largely a story of daily bombardments from the royal batteries, of raiding expeditions

of the cavalry under Rupert into the surrounding country, and daring sallies of the garrison. The operations of the besiegers were not conducted with the same vigour and ability as the defence. The king was nominally in chief command, but much was left to his generals, amongst whom there were often conflicting opinions and by whom, indeed, contradictory orders were issued. On several occasions Prince Rupert drew off men from the trenches to aid in his plundering expeditions. Massey, ever alert, was quick to notice such movements of troops and the consequent weakening of points in the royal lines, and as quick to take advantage of the weakness by a daring sally from the city gates. In one such sortie, he issued from the North Gate with 400 musketeers, charged right up to the royal guns, spiked them, and killed over a hundred of the Royalist soldiers.

One great opportunity of capturing the city was lost through the slackness of the Royalist generals. A breach was made in the defences, but there were not sufficient troops at hand to storm it. Men, women, and children of the town toiled desperately to repair the breach with woolpacks and baskets of earth, and before the Royalists were in a position to press their advantage the opportunity was lost.

Conspicuous in the fighting in the trenches on the Royalist side was the great Lord Falkland. So recklessly did he expose himself that it seemed that his noble heart, torn by sorrow at the evils which civil war brought upon the land he loved so well, sought before the city walls the death which, but a short while later, he found upon the field of Newbury.

But though the defence was maintained with great resolution and success the struggle involved a terrible strain upon the garrison. Guarding a long line of fortifications, begirt by an enemy many times their number, they were worn out by almost ceaseless watching and by frequent sallies. It became a question as to how long they could stand the physical strain of the struggle. Moreover, their supply of gunpowder and ammunition was running low, few barrels of powder remained out of the original

fifty, and they were reduced in some cases to the use of rounded pebbles for musket bullets. Still the defence was maintained with unabated resolution, even with calmness; 'the sadness of the time did not cloud their countenances.' Thus August wore away and September began.

The long strain made the ultimate success of the defence dependent upon the possibility of the Parliament

Matson House

being able to send a strong relief force in time. To this end the Parliament, fully alive to the vital importance of the struggle, was straining every nerve. The city of London, too, recognized that the fall of Gloucester would be the forerunner of its own capture. Money and men were found for the relieving army, and Gloucester was saved by the wealth and the trained bands of the capital.

The Royalists before Gloucester endeavoured in vain to persuade the stubborn defenders that their hope of relief by the Parliament was vain. An arrow was shot into the town from the royal lines bearing this message :—

'These are to let you know that your God, Waller, hath forsaken you, and hath retired to the Tower of London. Essex is beaten like a dog; yield to the King's mercy in time, otherwise, if we enter perforce, no quarter for such obstinate, traitorly rogues.'

But the warning and threats were of no avail. An arrow from the city bore an answer, more admirable in its spirit than in its verse, and touched with the grim, dour humour which distinguishes several episodes of the siege. Its message ran:—

Waller's no God of ours, base rogues you lie,
Our God survives from all eternity.
Though Essex beaten be, as you do say,
Rome's yoke we are resolved ne'er to obey.
But for our cabbages which ye have eaten,
Be sure ere long ye shall be soundly beaten.
Quarter we ask you none, if we fall down
King Charles will lose true subjects with the town.

The defiant doggerel bore the signature 'Nicholas Cudgel-you-well'.

But Essex in truth was not beaten. On the first day of September the Londoners joined his forces, and the army of the Parliament, now strong enough to attempt the relief of Gloucester, advanced by way of Banbury and Chipping Norton.

Meanwhile the royal cavalry, under Prince Rupert, had been dispatched from the lines before Gloucester to endeavour, upon the unenclosed uplands of the Cotswolds, to stop the advance of the relieving army. Essex entered Gloucestershire at Adlestrop and, near Stow-on-the-Wold, brushed aside the attempts of Rupert to prevent his progress. A toilsome march across the 'rough uneven ways' of Cotswold, where the soft oolite roads must always have presented a difficulty to the passage of the baggage and cannon of an army, brought the Puritan army to the edge of the Cotswold ridge, overlooking Prestbury and Cheltenham, on September 5. Part of the army descended into the valley and occupied the villages of Southam and Prestbury. The rear-guard,

however, had to encamp upon the bare uplands without food and shelter and exposed to one of the violent storms so frequent during the inclement summer of 1643. But they had some reward for their discomforts. Essex upon the hills, and the citizens of Gloucester, who crowded the ramparts of their city on that eventful 5th of September, saw the welcome sight of the blazing huts of the besiegers, which announced the raising of the

Southam House in 1803

siege. The king's army was in full retreat. The trenches, flooded with the 'great glut of water' which had fallen during the night, were abandoned, the guns were removed, and the royal forces marched away to the crest of the Cotswolds at Painswick, where they encamped in the ancient earthworks upon the summit of the hill. Essex then advanced to the little market town of Cheltenham, and, having driven out a small body of Royalists who held the place, gave his wearied troops a much needed rest. Thus it was not until the 8th day of

the month that the general of the Parliament entered the city of Gloucester in triumph.

The great siege had failed, and the skill and energy of Massey and the courage and resolution of the garrison had decided the turning-point of the war in favour of the Parliament. According to local tradition, the failure greatly depressed the spirits of the king. Upon the summit of the hill at Painswick, Charles, it is said, seated himself with his two sons, the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York, upon a heap of stones within the ancient camp. Oppressed by the gloom of the situation, the sodden earth and driving rainclouds and the dispirited faces of the soldiers, wearied by a toilsome retreat through the flooded lowlands, the young duke besought his father to take him home. 'Alas my child,' said the unhappy king, 'we have no home to go to.'

On the other hand, the relief of the city was hailed with great rejoicing by the people of London and by the party of the Parliament in general. The thanks of Parliament were voted to the Governor and to the Mayor of Gloucester, Dennis Wyse, while in addition a reward of £1,000 was awarded to Colonel Massey. Under the sway of the Puritans the 5th of September was known as 'Gloucester holiday', and on the new South Gate of the city which was erected after the old gate, sorely battered by the Royalist guns, had fallen in the year following the siege, the citizens inscribed the words:—

'A City assaulted by Man, but saved by God.'

Though the siege of Gloucester was the turning-point of the Civil War, and, though from the time of his failure to take the town, the fortunes of the king gradually declined, there was no immediate overwhelming victory for the Parliament. Indeed, it seemed not improbable that the army of Essex might be intercepted on its return march from Gloucester to London and forced to fight the Royalists upon the Cotswold uplands. King Charles and his generals in withdrawing from their lines before Gloucester had calculated upon such a battle.

The wide grassy uplands of the Cotswolds were, at

that time, entirely unfenced, and afforded splendid opportunities for the use of the Royalist cavalry. Strongly posted in a favourable position upon the hills, the Royalists hoped to bar the passage of the Puritan army and to overthrow and shatter it with the fiery charge and pursuit of Rupert's dashing horsemen. Such a victory would leave London still open to their attack, despite the failure at Gloucester. The Royalist army, therefore, occupied a long line upon the crest of the Cotswolds from Winchcombe to Evesham, and the king moved his head-quarters from Painswick to Sudeley Castle.

While the Royalists thus kept watch and ward upon the Cotswold ridge, Essex, after a brief stay at Gloucester, marched northwards. His position was one of considerable difficulty. The city after the siege could ill supply his army with food, and the whole neighbourhood was well-nigh stripped of supplies by the plundering raids of Rupert's horsemen. Moreover, the citizen soldiers of the London trained bands were naturally anxious to return to their city to attend to their own affairs and to defend their homes if necessary. Hence, on the third day after his arrival at Gloucester, Essex marched out of the town and took up his quarters at Tewkesbury. There he made preparations to bridge the Severn, in order to lead the Royalists to believe that he intended to continue his march northwards into Worcestershire. After some days thus occupied, he suddenly broke up his camp at Tewkesbury by night. For some distance he marched along the Evesham road as if intending to attack the Royalist position. Long before reaching the hills, however, he turned sharply southwards and, marching in the darkness through Cheltenham, his army climbed the Cotswold ridge well to the south of the king's army and struck out across the hills to Cirencester. In the early hours of the next morning Essex occupied that town, and his half-famished soldiers were rejoiced to find ample stores of provisions and to rest after their arduous night march.

King Charles at once started in pursuit, and at Newbury in Berkshire a battle was fought in which the noble-

hearted Lord Falkland fell. The battle was not very decisive so far as the actual fighting was concerned. It must, nevertheless, be regarded as a failure for the Royalists, since they did not succeed in their main object of preventing the return of Essex to London.

To the movements of the main armies of king and Parliament in our county, there succeeded a period of local warfare ; a war of petty battles and skirmishes, of fierce assaults and stubborn defences, which brought probably more distress and misery upon the county than did the movements of grand armies.

Sir William Vavasour was appointed to the command of the royal forces in Gloucestershire and fixed his head-quarters at Tewkesbury. Royalist forces also held the towns of Bristol and Cirencester ; the Castles of Sudeley, Berkeley, and Beverstone ; as well as Newnham, Dymock, Newent, and other places of less importance. In his fortified manor-house at Lydney, Sir John Winter, grandson of Elizabeth's great admiral and secretary to King Charles's queen, was, from the Puritan point of view, a very ' plague of the Forest '.

The city of Gloucester remained as the main bulwark of the cause of the Parliament in the county. The Royalists, having failed to capture the town by active siege, now subjected it to a kind of distant blockade. As a result the trade of the city was destroyed and its citizens suffered severely. Moreover, the soldiers of the garrison were ill-paid, ill-fed, and ill-clad. The position of Massey as governor was consequently very difficult. His difficulties, however, only served to render his tireless energy and ability more conspicuous. Faced by enemies out-numbering his own troops tenfold, driven to all sorts of expedients to find money to pay his soldiers, he nevertheless not only held the town but also harried his enemies for miles around the city. His attacks gave the Royalists no respite. Again and again Massey suddenly appeared before their positions or fortresses miles away from Gloucester, and his attacks, always well-planned, were generally successful. He drove the Royalists out of Westbury-on-Severn, and at Littledean Hall his soldiers,

enraged by the shooting of one of their number after the place had surrendered, slew the garrison. Massey then attacked Newnham, where the Royalists had posted themselves behind earthworks on the green and in the church. Driven from the green, the defenders all took shelter in the church. As the attacking party burst their way in, one of the Royalists fired a barrel of gunpowder. Enraged by the explosion, Massey's men slew some score of their opponents before admitting the rest to quarter.

After Sir William Vavasour had been withdrawn from the Royalist command in Gloucestershire, Massey further widened his sphere of activity. So rapidly did he move that, in less than two days after leaving Ross, he captured Beverstone Castle far away on the other side of the Severn, and, before the day closed, was on his way to Malmesbury, which he carried by assault. Northwards he captured Tewkesbury and marched into Herefordshire. Here he met with his only serious reverse, being surprised and beaten by Prince Rupert.

The name of 'Winter's Leap', given to a place where steep cliffs tower majestically above the romantic valley of the Wye, commemorates an episode in the fighting of 1644. There, local tradition says, the gallant cavalier Sir John Winter leapt his horse from the top of the rocks two hundred feet above the river, in order to escape pursuit. Though the 'leap' is, of course, as mythical as the legendary leap of King Arthur across the valley of the Dovey, the actual feat was worthy of a hero of romance. Defeated at Tidenham, the cavalier was hard pressed by the pursuit of a body of the enemy's horse. Finding escape in any other direction impossible, he faced the terrible perils of the almost precipitous cliffs, forced his horse down the steep slope, and arriving, as by a miracle, unhurt at the bottom, escaped by boat upon the river.

CHAPTER XLI

THE CLOSE OF THE CIVIL WAR IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Twice during the year 1644 King Charles passed through Gloucestershire. Threatened by the armies of Waller and Essex, he withdrew from Oxford and, crossing the Cotswolds by way of Burford and Bourton-on-the-Water, marched to Evesham and Worcester. Finding, however, that he had only Waller to deal with, the king recrossed the hills and defeated him at Cropredy Bridge near Banbury. Nor was this the king's only success in the west, for the army of Essex was driven into Cornwall where the infantry was forced to surrender. These successes were, however, more than counterbalanced by the crushing defeat of the Royalists at Marston Moor, by which the whole of the north country was lost to the king. Moreover, during this year the Parliament passed the memorable Self-denying Ordinance, the effect of which was to remove from the army those officers who were indisposed to go to extremities in dealing with the king. The results rapidly made themselves apparent in the following year. The wonderful Army of the New Model came into being, and under Fairfax and Cromwell marched from victory to victory.

In 1645, Charles left his head-quarters at Oxford, marched to Stow-on-the-Wold, and thence northwards. A month later the Royalist army was defeated in the decisive battle of Naseby. The defeat was so crushing that there remained no royal army in the field capable of withstanding the forces of Fairfax and Cromwell. The way was therefore opened for an attack by the army of the Parliament upon the west of England, the only part of the kingdom still held by the king. After taking Leicester, Fairfax marched along the Foss Way, passing through Moreton-in-the-Marsh, Northleach, and Lechlade. Having defeated a Royalist army which still kept the field, he resolved to attempt the capture of Bristol. The

decision was not arrived at without some hesitation, for the city was at the time being scourged by the plague. Meanwhile, Prince Rupert the governor of the town, had hastened back to defend his charge. The fortifications were strengthened, more guns mounted in the forts, and the suburbs of Clifton and Bedminster burnt, in order that they might not afford shelter to the besiegers.

Late in the month of August, Fairfax appeared before the town and established his head-quarters opposite Prior's Hill Fort. While the besiegers were engaged in drawing their lines of investment round the town, Rupert made a number of sallies from the walls which caused no great loss to either side. Some time was also spent in fruitless negotiations for the surrender of the city. These having failed, Fairfax decided to storm the town.

The signal for the general attack was given in the early hours of the 10th of September. The assault was delivered with great fury and was met with a stubborn resistance. On the Redcliff side, the besiegers failed to carry the works and were driven back with considerable loss. On the northern side of the city, however, they were more successful. At Prior's Hill Fort there was a desperate fight for over two hours. At length, however, the fort was captured and nearly all its defenders put to the sword. On the eastern side of the town the soldiers of Fairfax also forced a way through the defences. In Prince Rupert's opinion the city could no longer be defended, and further resistance would only involve useless bloodshed and destruction. He therefore sent to ask for a parley with the enemy, and in the evening the surrender of the town was arranged.

Fairfax and Cromwell marched with their victorious army into a city almost ruined by the horrors of the Civil War. The scourge of the plague, the fierce fighting of the siege, and the fires which broke out in three places in the town during the assault came as a climax to long sufferings during its occupation by the Royalists. The city was, we are told, 'more like a prison than a city, and the people more like prisoners than citizens; being brought so low with taxations, so poor in habit, and so dejected in

countenance; the streets so noisome, and the houses so nasty, as that they were unfit to receive friends or freemen till they were cleansed.'

Soon after the capture of Bristol, Berkeley Castle, the only important place in our county still held for the king, was besieged by a part of Fairfax's army detached for the purpose. The outworks of the castle were stormed by the besiegers, and the governor, Sir Charles Lucas, surrendered when the enemy had mounted heavy guns to bombard the castle itself.

From the time of the Battle of Naseby the cause of Charles had been hopeless. The king himself, however, does not appear to have despaired. He complained bitterly of the surrender of Bristol by Prince Rupert, though the Prince's decision was, no doubt, a wise one. Early in 1646 he sent out Sir Jacob Astley upon a forlorn hope, and some three thousand faithful Cavaliers gathered to his banner at Bridgenorth. At this time Colonel Morgan was in command at Gloucester, Massey having been attached to the army of Fairfax with the rank of Major-General in the preceding year. The Roundhead garrison of Hereford joined Morgan's troops at Gloucester, and the combined body of soldiers marched northwards to intercept Astley's Cavaliers. The two armies came into touch along the banks of the Avon but no general action was fought. Morgan was expecting reinforcements which would enable him to fight at greater advantage, while Astley, for his part, was anxious to take his army intact to the king at Oxford. At length, however, Astley crossed the Avon near Evesham and climbed to the Cotswold uplands by way of Broadway. Morgan followed, keeping touch with the Royalist army until reinforcements, under Brereton, came to his aid. The pursuit was then vigorously pressed, and, finding that he could not avoid a battle, Astley drew up his Cavaliers in position upon the open Cotswold pasture lands between Donnington and Stow. At daybreak on the next day, the army of the Parliament, about equal in numbers to the Cavaliers, advanced to the cry of 'God be our Guide'. The left wing met with a desperate resistance; it was broken,

rallied, and again driven back. The right wing, however, broke the line of the Royalists, and a general attack, which pressed home the advantage thus gained, utterly routed the forces of the king. Astley's army was not only defeated ; it was destroyed. In the battle and in the pursuit into the streets of Stow, many were slain or wounded, while some sixteen hundred men, including the commander, were taken prisoners.

The battle of Stow in 1646 was the last fight of any importance in the First Civil War. The king surrendered to the Scots, and, though handed over to the Parliament, did not give up hopes of regaining some of his lost authority. Indeed, in 1648, his Cavaliers made a last desperate effort to retrieve the fallen fortunes of the king. They rose in Kent, in Essex and in Wales, while a Scottish army crossed the northern border in his behalf. But the effort was vain ; Fairfax crushed the Royalists in the east, while Cromwell marched westwards through Gloucester and speedily stamped out the rising in Wales. At 'the godly city' he was entertained by the mayor and corporation, and the Gloucester sweetmeats, which were then as famous as the Gloucester lamprey-pies were through many centuries, figured in the repast. The Welsh rising crushed, Cromwell turned northwards. At Preston he broke the Scottish army, and in other fights completed its destruction. Shortly afterwards, Fairfax brought the Second Civil War to a close by the capture of Colchester. The last despairing effort of the gallant Cavaliers had the effect of sealing the doom of their unfortunate master. The army seized upon the Parliament, and refused admittance to those members who were not in their interest. By the remnant, the king was brought to trial and condemned to death. With serene and high-souled courage, he bowed his head to the executioner's axe before his royal palace of Whitehall on January 30, 1649.

CHAPTER XLII

LATE STUART TIMES

After the death of Charles I, the Puritan army held sway in England, and its great general Cromwell in a few years rose to more than kingly power as Lord Protector. But before he arrived at that exalted position, there was work for the soldiers of the invincible army he had trained. Ireland had to be subdued, and the Scots, who recognized Prince Charles as king, to be conquered. Moreover, in England itself there were still gallant Cavaliers whose loyalty was not crushed by defeat nor by the death of their king.

Upon the immediate task of the reduction of Ireland, Cromwell visited Bristol in 1649, and remained there a fortnight making preparations for his ruthless campaign in Ireland. The general came in great state, drawn in his carriage by six great Flanders mares. Two years later there rode through Gloucestershire and into Bristol city a traveller in far other guise, a simple serving-man with his master's sister, Mistress Lane, riding behind him. But, by descent at least, the humble young servant was Charles II, King of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and titular King of France. Through many dangers and with many romantic escapes the prince was making his way in disguise to the continent, after the defeat of the army, which had rallied to his support, at the battle of Worcester. There the Scots and the English Cavaliers had been finally crushed in their last fight with Cromwell's Ironsides. Among those who fought on the side of Prince Charles was General Massey, who had held Gloucester so stubbornly against his father. Never an extremist in politics or religion, Massey had gone over to the royal side after the execution of the king, and thenceforth he was the faithful servant of Charles when the prince was wandering in exile. In the fighting before the battle of Worcester, Massey was sorely wounded. Afterwards

on two occasions he escaped from imprisonment in the Tower. Twice he came to England from his refuge in Holland, carrying his life in his hand, upon secret missions in the service of Prince Charles.

The rule of the Puritans was, however, of no long duration. The genius of Cromwell and the stern strength of the Puritan character brought indeed honour to the English name throughout Europe and revived the glories of the Elizabethan Age. But the spirit of the English people chafed under the stern rule of the 'Saints', who looked upon the innocent joys and pleasant graces of life as sinful. Everywhere men longed for the old days when on Cotswold and in many another place they joined in merry sport and pastime, and when man and maid joined in sprightly dance or jolly roundelay and thought no wrong to do so. Even in the Puritan city of Gloucester, which had made Cromwell its Lord High Steward, there were mutterings of discontent before the great Protector died. After his death, his system of government, no longer held together by his iron will, rapidly fell to pieces.

General Monk and his army declared for a 'free Parliament'. Massey was among those who actively supported him, and was elected as member for the city of Gloucester in the Parliament which recalled Charles to the throne of his ancestors. Massey was knighted by the new king in 1660 on his triumphal progress from Dover to London. On May 29, a date still generally known as 'Oak-apple Day' and, to Gloucestershire children, as 'Shick-shack Day', Charles II made his entry into the capital.

Before Charles returned to his kingdom one of the chief historic monuments in our county had been destroyed. Bristol Castle, which for so many centuries had been the dwelling-place of illustrious men and the scene of important events, was destroyed by order of the Lord Protector in 1655. So thoroughly was the order carried out that there are but few traces now remaining of the grim old stronghold, the most important being the entrance to the banqueting hall which still stands in Tower Street.

By order of Charles II, another historical feature of

our county was destroyed. The king remembered the bitterness of the siege when, as a lad, he lay with his father at Matson House before the walls of the rebellious city, the humiliations of the retreat, the dejection of his father as they sat together within the ancient camp on Painswick Hill. The city early sent congratulations to the king upon his return, and besought his pardon. But Charles had learnt the wisdom of destroying fortifications which might be used against him, and Gloucester was punished by the destruction of its ancient walls and some of the gates.

Writers of the time of the later Stuarts bear witness to the wealth and thriving trade of Bristol. Evelyn thought that it vied with London, not indeed in size, but in 'manner of building, shops, bridge, traffic, exchange, market-place, &c.' Pepys gives us a livelier account of his visit eight years after the Restoration with his wife and her maid Deborah, and tells of the noble spacious quay, the wealth and hospitality of the merchants. One feature of the city, long characteristic of it, caused Pepys to marvel greatly; namely, the narrow streets wherein no carts drawn by horses were to be seen. So thickly was the ground beneath the streets and houses honeycombed by vaults and store-houses that heavy carts would have been in danger of breaking through the roadway into them. Goods were, therefore, carried through the streets by men or in carts drawn by dogs. The narrow, crowded, tortuous streets were in many places bordered by beautiful timbered houses, and above the huddled dwellings rose a great number of churches of singular beauty.

The great wealth of Bristol at this time was founded mainly upon its ocean commerce and especially upon its colonial trade. It was the great mart for the produce of the rich islands of the West Indies, the sugar, rum, molasses, spices, and cabinet woods. To it came also a large proportion of the exports of the North American colonies, the tobacco of Virginia, the produce of the forests of New England and of the Newfoundland fisheries. The refining of sugar, the manufacture of tobacco, and

The West Gate of Gloucester in 1803

the making of soap from fish oil were thriving industries founded upon this commerce. So great was the passion for colonial trade that 'there was scarcely a small shopkeeper in Bristol who had not a venture on board of some ship bound for Virginia or the Antilles'.

One of the wealthy merchants of Bristol at the time when Pepys paid his visit to the city was Edward Colston, whose memory is still kept green in his native city by the annual celebration of 'Colston's Day'. A man of mark in the commerce both of London and of Bristol, Colston devoted a part of his great wealth to works of charity and benevolence. He took no small share, as a sturdy Tory and Churchman, in the affairs of his time, and sat in Parliament as Tory member for Bristol in the reign of Queen Anne. But his chief claim to the gratitude of the city rests upon his active and wise benevolence. Large sums were devoted by him to his various charities, the most important of his benefactions being the foundation of Colston's School, which he put under the government of the Society of Merchant Venturers, of which he was a member.

The city of Bristol passed through a night of great confusion and tumult during the rebellion of the Duke of Monmouth. In 1685 that unhappy young nobleman, relying upon his personal popularity and the dislike which the attacks of King James, an ardent Roman Catholic, upon the Protestant religion had aroused, landed in England and was acclaimed in the west as 'King Monmouth'. At the head of the undisciplined crowd of peasants and workmen who followed his standard, he advanced against Bristol, a city in which he had many adherents. The town was weakly held, its only defenders being the Gloucestershire trained bands under the Duke of Beaufort.

While Monmouth lay within a few miles of the town, a fire broke out shortly after sunset upon a vessel lying alongside the quay. Possibly the fire was an accident, possibly it was started by some of Monmouth's supporters in the hope that his troops would take advantage of the confusion caused by the fire, which

threatened the destruction of the whole of the shipping in the crowded port. Beaufort, however, was not to be drawn from his charge. Rather should Bristol be burnt to the ground, he said, than that the rebels should take the town. He kept his trained bands under arms, the Duke of Monmouth made no attack during the night, and the arrival of more Royalist forces destroyed the hope of a successful attack by the rebels. Monmouth turned back into Somerset to meet with defeat, made shameful by his early flight from the field of battle and his abject but unavailing pleadings for mercy.

After the victory Judge Jeffreys passed through the west country upon the Bloody Assize, and at Bristol six persons were convicted of high treason, three of whom were executed.

Jeffreys has generally been represented as an inhuman monster. One act of his at that assize must, however, stand to his credit. The traffic in slaves, which the saintly Wulfstan had denounced long centuries before, was still the shame of the city. Criminals, and even slight offenders against the law, and kidnapped children were shipped across the sea. There is unfortunately good reason to believe that many of the chief citizens and even magistrates connived at this infamous traffic and shared in its scandalous profits. Judge Jeffreys from his seat upon the bench roundly abused the town for its part in the vile trade. Moreover, the mayor of the town was forced to leave the bench, where he sat in his scarlet befurred robes of office by the side of the judge, and made to stand at the bar like a criminal. Jeffreys rated him soundly as a kidnapping knave, fined him £1,000 and, moreover, bound over six aldermen of the town to appear before the King's Bench on a charge of sharing in the traffic.

James II and his tool, Judge Jeffreys, possibly hoped that the stern vengeance meted out to the unhappy followers of Monmouth would so terrorize the nation that there would be no further opposition to their policy. But the obstinate folly of the king destroyed the loyalty even of those who, by character and training, were devoted adherents of the Crown. His final act of folly was the

indictment of the Seven Bishops, of whom Trelawney, Bishop of Bristol, was one, for a petition against his Roman Catholic policy. The streets of the city blazed with bonfires, and the steeples of its churches rocked with the triumphant clang of the bells when Trelawney and his fellow bishops were acquitted.

Soon the Prince of Orange landed on the south coast to put an end to the misrule of James. When he marched inland, Beaufort was forced to fly in haste from Bristol, and the city opened her gates and declared for the deliverer. Indeed, scarcely a blow was struck in the cause of James, and the last king of the direct line of the ill-fated and misguided Stuarts was driven from the throne of his ancestors.

CHAPTER XLIII

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY; THE METHODIST REVIVAL

With the flight of James II from his kingdom and the accession of William III and Mary, civil war and armed strife ended in Southern England. Since that time, only the fruitless risings on behalf of the Stuarts in Scotland and the north of England and a few raids on the coast have disturbed the general peace within the confines of our island. Hence, from the eighteenth century onwards, the connexion between the history of our county and the general history of England is to be found mainly in political, social, commercial, and religious movements rather than in the movements of armies and the clash of battle.

The eighteenth century was in many respects a period of great contrasts. Social ranks were sharply marked and separated by almost impassable gulfs. A brilliant and courtly aristocracy, a prosperous but unlettered middle class, and an utterly ignorant populace made up

the three chief grades of society. It was, in the main, a material and selfish age, though there were not wanting souls capable of generous devotion and self-sacrifice. The literature of the time reflects the spirit of the century. It was the age of the 'wits'. Brilliance of expression, smoothness of versification, and biting satire were held to be the tests of poetry; not the feeling for Nature and the natural affections and passions of man and the expression of those feelings in melodious verse. Unreclaimed nature was considered barbarous and savage; it must be beautified by formal plantations and walks and embellished with grottos and sham ruins in order to suit the taste of the time. Thus, for example, Pope, the greatest poet of his age, visits Gloucestershire. He is unmoved by the wide prospects and far horizons of the hills, but delighted with the formal avenues and plantations which Allen, Lord Bathurst, is making at his seat, Oakley Park, just outside the town of Cirencester. 'Pope's Seat' in the park still preserves the memory of the visit.

In 1716 he wrote: 'I am with Lord Bathurst at my bower. It is the place that of all others I fancy; and I am not yet out of humour with it, though I have had it some months. . . . I write an hour or two every morning, then ride out a hunting upon the downs. Eat heartily, talk tender sentiments with Lord B., or draw plans for houses and gardens, open avenues, cut glades, plant firs, contrive waterworks—all very fine and beautiful in our own imagination.' And in a later letter he says, 'I could pass whole days in only describing the future and as yet visionary beauties of the noble scenes, openings, and avenues of this immense design.'

The visitor to the park at the present day can scarcely fail to feel some of Pope's enthusiasm, or view without pleasure the vistas of the far-stretching avenues and the beauties of the thickets where Nature nowadays triumphs over the attempts of Art to reduce her to order and formality. Few to-day, however, would share the great Dean Swift's approval of a supposed improvement effected by Lord Bathurst. 'My Lord B. has greatly

improved the Wood House which you may remember but a cottage,' he writes, 'not a bit better than an Irish cabin. It is now a venerable castle, and has been taken by an antiquary for one of King Arthur's.'

The material spirit of the age was, to a large degree, reflected in the Church. Religion had in many places sunk into mere formal observance, and great numbers of the clergy in the country districts were more engrossed in the pleasures of the chase and the table than in the services of the Church. The hard-riding, free-drinking parsons were to be distinguished from their neighbours the country squires by little save the colour of their coats.

The eighteenth century, however, saw a great religious movement in which our county played a prominent part. This movement had, at least, the merit of bringing spiritual things before the eyes of men and of arousing the Church to the need for action. The need was certainly great. The ignorance and brutality of the lower classes of the people constituted a national danger. Even the sports were popular in proportion to their cruelty. Crime was terribly prevalent, although it was punished with savage harshness. Death was the penalty for over a hundred crimes, and the lash was freely used. In every village stood the stocks, such as those which still stand as relics of the past at Charlton Kings, Painswick, and other places in our county, to punish trivial offences. Here and there by the road-side, bodies of criminals swung from gibbets in the wind. The prisons were dens of pestilence in which foul fevers were bred.

The great religious movement known as the Methodist Revival began among a small body of Oxford students. It led in time to the establishment of the powerful Methodist churches. But perhaps a still more important result was the influence which it had in quickening the general spiritual life of the people. The Church of England was perforce aroused from its lethargy, and the moral conscience of the nation awakened to the many evils which had flourished unchecked.

The great leader and organizer of the Methodist Movement was John Wesley. But its greatest preacher,

Cirencester Park

an orator whose command over the emotions of his hearers has seldom been surpassed, was George Whitefield. He was the son of the landlord of the 'Bell Inn', Gloucester, and there he was born in 1714. As a boy, he attended St. Mary de Crypt School, delighting in the stage-plays the scholars were accustomed to perform, and giving more attention to reading them than to his lessons. At the age of fifteen he left school, and, his father being dead, for some time helped his mother in the management of the inn. In 1732 he entered Pembroke College, Oxford, as a servitor.

During his youth, Whitefield had alternated between his love of amusement, especially of the theatre, and his underlying feeling of religious enthusiasm. The future course of his life was determined by his association at Oxford with the brothers John and Charles Wesley. He joined the small but ardent band of religious reformers who met together for spiritual exercises and devotion in spite of the scoffs of their fellow undergraduates. The little body gained the name of Methodists from the regular, methodical way in which they carried out their religious exercises. Even among that little band of zealots, Whitefield was remarkable for the hardships with which he mortified his body; his fasts, his prayers lying upon the bare earth, his incessant labours among those who were sick or in prison. His health broke down, and he returned to Gloucester for rest. There he recovered his health, became assured of his own salvation, and resolved to devote himself to the salvation of others. In 1736 he was ordained in Gloucester Cathedral by the bishop of the diocese.

Whitefield, like the Wesleys, was now a clergyman of the Church of England, and the reformers hoped to be able to carry on their work within the fold of the Church. But the general dislike of the clergy to the methods of the reformers and to some of their doctrines drove them at last to form a separate religious body. Shut out from the churches, they took to the practice of field-meetings, and addressed great multitudes of people in the open air. Whitefield laboured with incessant zeal, travelling through

the length and breadth of our island, and carrying his missionary zeal across the Atlantic to the American colonies. He often preached for from forty to sixty hours in a single week. The leaders of the Methodist Revival certainly did not spare themselves, and John Wesley expected an equal devotion to labour even from children. His regulations for Kingswood School, which he founded, provided no hours of play whatever for the scholars!

Nowhere did the efforts of Whitefield and the Wesleys meet with greater success than in Gloucestershire. In Bristol especially, they made great numbers of converts. Hence the busy commercial town has been called the cradle of the Methodist Movement, which had its birthplace in the peaceful calm of the Oxford colleges. The success of their efforts in Bristol was especially great among the colliers of Kingswood, who, in an age of harshness and brutality, were debased and brutal beyond their fellows. But the eloquence of Whitefield drew vast crowds of the rough miners to hear him, so that sometimes ten thousand people hung upon his words. So powerfully did he sway their emotions that tears rolled down the grimy faces of hardened men, and they cried and groaned aloud in anguish for their sins. Similar outbreaks of religious excitement marked the preaching of John Wesley in Bristol. The number of converts to the new movement led to the building of a meeting-house in the town—the first Methodist place of worship. At Bristol, too, happened many of the chief events in the early history of Methodism. Naturally, too, Whitefield frequently visited his birthplace, Gloucester, and preached there, often in his brother's field by the 'Bell Inn'.

As is perhaps only to be expected from its emotional character, the preaching of the Methodists especially affected the poor and unlearned. But the power of Whitefield's oratory is acknowledged by men of such keen and sceptical minds as Bolingbroke and Hume. Even Lord Chesterfield the polished man of the world, a type of the eighteenth-century aristocrat, was startled out of his courtly calm by the graphic eloquence of the preacher. Whitefield in a sermon was likening the state of

a sinner to that of a blind man walking towards the brink of a precipice. So vividly did he draw the picture that as he portrayed the final plunge into the abyss, Lord Chesterfield cried out in terror 'God! he's gone'.

It was to his powers of oratory and vivid description, heightened by the intensity of his religious zeal, that Whitefield owed his extraordinary power over the emotions of his hearers. A fair man with small blue eyes, in one of which was a cast which caused scoffers to call him 'Doctor Squintum', he had no special advantages of appearance. But the eloquence, which moved even the polished Chesterfield, convulsed multitudes of the emotional and unlearned.

Another important religious development of the eighteenth century originated in Gloucester, and was the work of a native of the town. Robert Raikes is generally spoken of as the founder of Sunday Schools. Although it is doubtless a fact that some few Sunday Schools were established earlier than those founded by Raikes, he nevertheless deserves the title, since it is from his labours and from the schools which he founded in Gloucester in 1780 that the system became general. Its importance at the time was great, no less from an educational than from a religious point of view. For great numbers of the people, the Sunday Schools for a long time formed almost the only available source of knowledge.

CHAPTER XLIV

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY; GLOUCESTERSHIRE AND THE POETS

The eighteenth century saw a great change in the character of the Cotswold region. From the earliest time the wide shelving table-land had been open and unfenced, devoted almost entirely to the great flocks of sheep which brought prosperity to the Cotswold towns

and villages. But, as the profits of corn-growing increased, large areas of the hill-lands were broken up into ploughland and enclosed. Barley was especially a profitable crop in spite of the cold winds of the hills of which the Gloucestershire rhyme speaks :—

> Stow-on-the-Wold,
> Where the wind blows cold,
> And they have fires in August.

True, it ripened later than in the more sheltered vale, whence arose another Gloucestershire saying, concerning anything tardy in arrival, 'It 's as long coming as Cotswold barley.' But though late in ripening, the barley from the hill-fields was, and indeed still is, excellent in quality and worth good prices for brewing purposes.

The enclosure of the Cotswolds was begun by Lord Bathurst, and his example was widely followed. Marshall, writing in 1788, says : 'thirty years ago this district lay almost entirely in an open state. At present it may be said to be in a state of enclosure, though some townships yet remain open.' To-day the Cotswolds are a 'stone-wall' country, the quick-set hedges of the vale giving place to the dry walls of undressed, oolite stones, which are one of the characteristic features of the district. Here and there, however, are still unenclosed stretches of considerable extent which help us to realize the unenclosed Cotswolds of old days. Such open spaces as Minchinhampton and Cleeve Commons, covered with sweet short herbage and redolent in summer with the scent of wild thyme, must to-day be much as they were when the men of the Stone and Bronze Ages built their barrows upon the hills.

Two great events in the latter part of the eighteenth century profoundly influenced the course of the world's history. The first of these, the American Rebellion, was of especial importance to Bristol, since the city had for long been the great port for English trade with the American Colonies. During the early part of the war, Bristol was represented in Parliament by the great orator, Edmund Burke, one of the most strenuous opponents

of the fatal measures which led up to the struggle. He was, however, too independent for the voters of the city, and ceased to represent Bristol after the election of 1780.

The American War was soon followed by the French Revolution, destined to convulse Europe for a quarter of a century. It was at first welcomed by many ardent souls in our country who saw in the French struggle for liberty the dawn of a new era, the birth of a new world. Among these eager spirits were two poets; one, Robert Southey, a native, and the other, Coleridge, for a time a resident, of Bristol. Both were destined to take prominent parts in the great outburst of poetry which marked the latter part of the eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth century. In the poetry of the New Age the fetters which the school of Pope had imposed were cast aside. The poets adopted freer and more varied forms of verse, and returned for subjects to the natural passions of man and the beauties of nature.

The new school of poetry did not, however, burst unheralded upon the world. Among the names of the forerunners of the great period of Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Byron, Scott, and Coleridge, must be included that of the ill-fated lad, Thomas Chatterton, who was born at Bristol in 1752. The 'marvellous boy' early developed a faculty for the writing of verse. He turned to the ancient days for his subjects, but, unfortunately, he pretended that his poems were the work of an imaginary 'Rowley' who, the young impostor declared, was a chaplain to the famous Canynges. He further alleged that the sham antique poems had been found by him in an old chest in St. Mary Redcliff Church. The forged poems brought Chatterton into some degree of public notice, and, in 1770, he left his native town to essay the difficult task of earning a living by his pen in London. He failed miserably, and, half-starved and despairing, poisoned himself in the garret in which he lodged in Holborn. His memory survives perhaps rather through the audacity of his forgeries and the tragedy of his death than through his actual literary achievements.

Nevertheless, his poems show distinct imaginative and poetic gifts which, had they been developed under more favourable circumstances, might have brought him no mean place in the company of poets.

In the early years of the French Revolution Southey and Coleridge were living in Bristol. Southey, who was the son of a draper in Wine Street in the city, met Coleridge in the town in 1794. The two ardent young poets, together with a lesser poet named Robert Lovell, the son of a Bristol pinmaker, entered eagerly into projects for the new and better era which they believed had been ushered in by the Revolution in France. Their great scheme had for its object the establishment of a settlement in America, where all should labour for the general welfare, and where all should be equal in all things. Their vision of a perfect society across the Atlantic came to nothing, and Southey and Coleridge in maturer years came to hold views very different from those which had engrossed their ardent young minds. But their association in Bristol left an enduring mark upon the history of our literature. They laboured hard to provide money for their visionary scheme, and, as one means to that end, they obtained the support of a young bookseller of Bristol, Joseph Cottle, to publish their poems. Thus to Bristol fell the honour of sending forth some of the early poems of Coleridge and of Southey. Among them were Coleridge's *Poems on Various Subjects* and Southey's *Joan of Arc*. A still more important work, the *Lyrical Ballads* by Coleridge and Wordsworth, which contains the wonderful 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner', was also published at Bristol.

CHAPTER XLV

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY; THE SPAS

The frequent wars during the eighteenth century naturally restricted the opportunities for foreign travel. Moreover, the popularity of mineral springs as a means of restoring or preserving health increased. Hence a number of places in England, where such springs are found, rapidly increased in importance and became the resorts of people of rank and fashion.

Indeed Bath, in the neighbouring county of Somerset, for a time rivalled even London itself as the centre of the fashionable life of England. In our own county, too, several places became more or less famous for their mineral waters. The Hotwells district of Bristol was one of these, and the rise of the splendid suburb of Clifton was due partly to the popularity of its own mineral springs, and partly to its convenience as a place of residence for those who came to drink the water of the more fashionable Hotwell.

The modern town of Cheltenham, however, furnishes the most remarkable example in our county of the growth of a considerable town through the popularity of its mineral springs. The medicinal properties of the Bath waters had been known as long ago as Roman times. The Hotwell of Bristol, too, was known in early times, for William Wyrcestre speaks of its waters as being 'as warm as milk or as the Bath water'. The mineral springs of Cheltenham, however, do not appear to have been noticed until the eighteenth century. Up to that time, Cheltenham had been a small market town, depending for its prosperity upon agriculture. During a great part of the seventeenth century the most important crop grown around the town, and also in the fields around the neighbouring town of Winchcombe, was tobacco, through plantations of which the troops of Essex advanced to the relief of Gloucester. Local historians conjecture that the introduction of the

cultivation of the plant may have been due to Sir Francis Drake, who had some connexions with the county, or to Sir Walter Raleigh who owned a number of estates in Gloucestershire. However that may be, the tobacco plantations round Cheltenham and Winchcombe flourished so much that Fuller tells us that 'many got great estates thereby'.

The prosperity of the industry, however, aroused powerful opposition, especially from the tobacco planters of Virginia, and from the merchants of Bristol and of other English ports, who imported the produce of the American plantations. Their hostility resulted in the passing, under the Commonwealth, of an Act of Parliament forbidding the growing of tobacco in England. The Gloucestershire planters replied by addressing to the Parliament 'The humble petition and cries of many landowners and labourers of Cheltenham and Winchcombe in the county of Gloucester'. Therein they set forth that the people of those towns 'have for many years past grown in the common fields the weed called Tobacco, and pray that your Highnesse and Parliament will permit them through your Council to practise the same, as their crops will be perilled and lost, and it will be to the ruin of very many labourers'.

The landowners and labourers, moreover, did not confine themselves to petitioning in defence of their industry. As they continued to plant the weed despite the Act, orders were sent by the Government for a force of soldiers from Gloucester to destroy the plantations. Thereupon the Cheltenham folk rose against the soldiers and showed so formidable a temper that the troopers were forced to beat a retreat. The *Mercurius Politicus*, a newspaper of 1658, tells us that 'Cornet Wakefield, with a party of horse, marched out of Gloucester to destroy the Tobacco about Winchcomb and Cheltenham. The country did rise on them, about 500 or 600, threatening to kill them, horse and man, so that they were constrained to depart'.

Indeed, in spite of the Government, tobacco evidently continued to be planted for some twenty years or so after

this time. In 1675, John Ogilby published, from personal observations, his *Britannia, or an Illustration of the Kingdom of England and Dominion of Wales.* Therein he thus describes the towns of Cheltenham and Winchcombe. ' At nine miles (from Gloucester) enter Cheltenham, in extent 6 furlongs ; it numbers near 200 houses ; hath a fair church.—Winchcomb is a large town, containing about 300 houses ; a place well known, for at this place and Cheltenham, the people are much given to plant tobacco, though they are suppress by authority.' However, this is the last reference to the tobacco plantations as actually existing, so that it appears probable that the industry died out, or was effectually suppressed, soon after the date of Ogilby's visit.

Meanwhile a source of greater wealth than the tobacco plantations had been oozing unregarded from the ground upon which the town is built. The peculiar properties of this spring appear to have been first noticed in the early part of the eighteenth century. Local historians tell us that attention was first directed to the spring in 1716 by the fact that flocks of pigeons, presumably when they needed a ' cure ', visited the spot to pick up the saline matters which were left behind as the waters of the spring dried up. The pigeons were the forerunners of many other flocks of visitors more remunerative to the town.

From 1720 onward advertisements of the Cheltenham Salts and Cheltenham Spa appeared, not only in the *Gloucester Journal,* but also in the London papers. Indeed, a letter in the *Morning Post* in 1743 informs us that the waters ' having given within the last few years such relief to the disorders of several thousands of the quality, gentry and others of this Island, the company this year was greater than in any one before . . . and 'tis thought that Cheltenham will in a few years become one of the first Wells in reputation in Europe '. And in support of that opinion the writer goes on to give a lengthy string of names, the first Cheltenham list of ' arrivals ', including such people of rank and fashion as Their Graces the Duke and Duchess of Argyll, the

Earl of Chesterfield, Lord and Lady Westmoreland, Lady Suffolk, and many others, titled and untitled, but all undoubtedly people of 'quality'. One wonders whether any of these fine people found amusement in such sports as the Cudgel Match, advertised in the *Gloucester Journal* of 1741 'to take place opposite the Plough in Cheltenham on Friday the 14th inst.' The victor who broke the most heads in three bouts, and who came off clear was, it appears, to receive 'a good hat and a guinea in money'. The less fortunate wights who did not 'come off clear' were not left without some solace for their cracked pates. There was to be a payment of one shilling to 'every person whose head is broke'. Apparently, no lack of aspirants to the honour of covering an uncracked head with the prize hat and pocketing the golden guinea was anticipated, for the cudgel-play was advertised to last from half-past two until seven o'clock. Nor was it the only sport surviving from the great days of the Cotswold Games. As a kind of after-thought the advertisement ends: 'N.B. Betwixt the hours of 10 and 2, there will be a gown jigged for by the girls.'

No doubt the fine ladies and gentlemen looked on with some amusement at the country maids jigging for the new gown, and the lads laying on lustily with their cudgels. Perhaps some of them esteemed the bull-baiting, which took place in the High Street, the better sport. Certainly some of them entered their birds for such matches as the one thus advertised: 'A Cock Match by Subscription, To be fought in Cheltenham Street by the Gentlemen of Gloucestershire, to weigh on Saturday the 30th, and to fight the 1st of August (1757).'

'Cheltenham Street' in this advertisement reminds us that the little town was as yet just one long straggling street—the present High Street—down the middle of which ran a branch of the Chelt crossed by stepping stones. However, the streamlet had been arched in, and a good road made before the town received the visit which made its fortunes secure. Of lords and ladies visiting the town there had been many, and amusements more refined than cudgel-playing and bull-baiting had gradually been

provided. There was the 'Old Well Walk' for the morning promenade after taking the waters, there was 'the music of the town' to enliven the parade of beaux and belles, and in the evening there were balls and assemblies, and no doubt, much card-playing for high stakes in the eighteenth-century manner, all under the direction of a Master of the Ceremonies who ruled the polite little society. Quite in the eighteenth-century manner too, is the little volume of facile, shallow verse in which some of the visitors sang the praises of the little town :—

> Deep in Chelt'nham's hallow'd bow'rs,
> The grave might spend their serious hours ;
> The gay no languor can invade,
> The poet here may court the shade,
> The beau on smiling beauty stare,
> And pale misfortune dry its tear.

But the great day in the history of the town was July 12, 1788, when King George III, on the advice of his physician, came to the town to drink the waters and was accompanied by three princesses, the Princess Royal, Augusta, and Elizabeth. The Master of the Ceremonies at that eventful time has left a record of the visit. 'The bells proclaimed the joyful intelligence, music paraded the street, and the festivity was concluded with a general illumination, and plentiful though not blameable or licentious libations to the health of George III, the Queen, and the Royal Family.' It is well to know, in view of the prowess of our grandfathers of the three-bottle days, that the 'libations', though admittedly plentiful, were not so excessive as to deserve the slightest censure.

Madame D'Arblay—Fanny Burney, the author of *Evelina*—was with the Royal Family at Cheltenham as one of the Maids of Honour to the Queen. In her diary, which preserves a picture of the dull and decorous court of George III, there are a number of details concerning the royal visit. She describes the town as being still 'almost all one street, extremely long, clean and well-paved', and she was delighted with the situation of the place. 'It is, indeed, situated in a most sweet spot,

surrounded with lofty hills beautifully variegated, and bounded, for the principal object, with the hills of Malvern.' For the rest, the diary reflects the simple life of the little court; the smallness of the rooms which sheltered its members, the absence of state, and the trivial, garrulous talk of the old king. George had tried and failed, rather dismally, to 'be a king' in his younger days. At Cheltenham, in his middle life, there was little that was regal in his manner, though, doubtless, the homely sayings and simple dress which earned him the name of Farmer George, endeared him to the Gloucestershire yeomen and labourers. Loudly, no doubt, they cheered when the king, hearing 'Nanny the Bellwoman', the town crier, wind up an announcement with the customary 'God save the King', took off his hat and cried 'And save the people too'. Many such simple stories are told of the king, who, dressed in his accustomed plain blue coat and brown bob-wig, wandered about the town and the surrounding country. Thackeray has retold one of them in *The Four Georges*. 'One morning before anybody else was up, the king walked about Gloucester town; pushed over Molly the housemaid with her pail, who was scrubbing the doorsteps; ran upstairs and woke all the equerries in their bedrooms; and then trotted down to the bridge, where, by this time, a dozen of louts were assembled. "What! is this Gloucester New Bridge?" asked our gracious monarch; and the people answered him, "Yes, your Majesty." "Why, then, my boys," said he, "let us have a huzzay!"'

The king's course of the waters lasted some five weeks and his approval of the town made Cheltenham the fashion. Crowds of visitors of rank and position followed in his wake. In 1806 came the Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV, highest in rank of all the dandified bucks of his time, and, in that sense and in none other, 'the first gentleman of Europe.' Queen Adelaide, the wife of William IV, and many members of the royal family of France were other visitors of high rank, while among those who owe their fame less to their rank than to their achievements were the great Duke of Wellington and Lord Byron.

With such patronage the town grew with great rapidity. New pump-rooms in the 'classical' style of the period eclipsed the old Royal Wells, roads and squares and terraces were laid out, and the town, not much more than a village in the middle of the eighteenth century had, a hundred years after, a population of some forty thousand people.

CHAPTER XLVI

THE ERA OF REFORM; THE BRISTOL RIOTS

The period of the great war with the French republic and with Napoleon had been on the whole a prosperous time for English agriculture. Gloucestershire, being mainly an agricultural county, had shared in that prosperity. But after the peace which followed the great victory of Waterloo the pinch of depression began to be severely felt. Meanwhile, a vast change was transforming the country. Goods tended more and more to be turned out in vast quantities from huge factories. The old hand industries of the villages were languishing. The age of steam was at hand.

Meanwhile, means of transit were being developed. Roads were greatly improved in the latter part of the eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth century. About the same time a great system of canals was made. In our own county a canal to join the Thames and Severn had for generations been a favourite project of London and Bristol merchants. Pope speaks of it as one of the dreams of Lord Bathurst. Its construction was carried out in the latter part of the eighteenth century, and was a remarkable achievement, for the canal was the first in which the engineers surmounted the difficulty of great variations in the levels. It was the pioneer of a great development of internal navigation. A very remarkable

feature of the canal is the wonderful Sapperton Tunnel by which it is carried under Earl Bathurst's park.

The Gloucester and Berkeley Canal, a ship canal 16 miles long, joining the Severn at Gloucester and at Sharpness Point, was made in the early part of the nineteenth century. Upon it the sea-borne trade of Gloucester still depends.

By 1840 the Thames and Severn Canal earned a revenue of over £10,000 a year in tolls. Like most of our inland water-ways, its usefulness has been largely destroyed by the railways. In the year mentioned the railway line from Gloucester to Birmingham was opened, and in the next year the line from London reached Cirencester.

But before the railways were made the use of steam-driven machinery had produced great changes. Manufactures gravitated to the coal-fields, and the towns upon them grew rapidly. For good or ill, England was becoming more and more a country dependent upon her factories and foundries, less and less upon her ploughs and sheep-folds. It was almost inevitable that the new interests should demand a fuller representation in the House of Commons. Indeed, the House had ceased to represent even the middle class of the country, and its members were largely the nominees of the great families who regarded the 'pocket-boroughs' as their personal property. Hence under the pressure of bad times, and in the belief, still general, that times will at once, or almost at once, become better with a change of Government, the cry for reform of the House of Commons, which had slumbered during the great war, broke out as soon as peace was declared.

It was, indeed, an easy matter to point out the glaring absurdities of the basis upon which the House was elected, if it was to be regarded as an assembly representative of the nation or, indeed, of even the middle and upper classes. Our own county furnished cases sufficiently striking, though the inequalities were by no means so great as in the country at large. In 1831, by which time the demand for reform was become so strong that resistance to it threatened to lead to revolution, the representation

of our county stood as follows. Gloucester, Tewkesbury, Cirencester and Bristol each returned two members, and there were also two members for the county outside the boroughs. Now Cirencester had a population of but little over 5,000, Tewkesbury a few hundreds more. On the other hand, Bristol was nearly thirty, and the county outside the boroughs nearly forty times as populous as Cirencester. Moreover, two modern towns had grown up and outstripped the ancient boroughs of Cirencester and Tewkesbury, but were without representatives in Parliament. The mineral waters of Cheltenham, the looms of Stroud and the neighbouring villages had given rise to towns more than four times as populous as Cirencester.

Opponents of reform were, however, not lacking. They claimed that, whatever might be the apparent defects of the system, it had at any rate worked well and had produced a long line of great statesmen and administrators. They pointed out, and with truth, that some of the most illustrious of these, such men as the two Pitts, Burke and Fox, had owed their introduction to Parliament to the 'pocket-boroughs' which the reformers denounced so vigorously.

An election in 1831, however, showed a great majority in favour of 'the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill', to use the reformers' watchword. The House of Lords, nevertheless, threw it out. Thereupon a storm of indignation broke out, especially in the great towns, and riots occurred in many places.

Nowhere did the rioters go to such lengths as at Bristol. For some time the city was in the hands of a furious mob, arson and pillage flourished unchecked, hundreds of lives were sacrificed, and vast damage was done before order was re-established. For these excesses, the system of town-government was to some extent to be blamed. Bristol had an unreformed corporation which had long ceased in any sense to represent the people. It rested upon no popular support and hence the law-abiding citizens of Bristol looked on in apathy while the mob pillaged and burnt. No longer, as in the old days, could the mayor summon by the clang of the alarm bell the

forces of the wards and guilds to quell disturbers of the peace. The sense of general responsibility for good order had gone, and the descendants of the stout townsmen, who had so often risen to expel the armed followers of the Berkeleys, sat still and allowed a mere drunken mob to terrorize the city.

But the main responsibility for the extent to which the riot was allowed to grow must rest upon those to whom the government of the city was entrusted. Warnings of coming trouble were not lacking ; forces to meet it, small indeed in number, had been provided.

The Recorder of the City, Sir Charles Wetherell, had taken a prominent part in opposition to the Bill, and there were ugly mutterings of what would happen when, in the ordinary course of his duties, he should come to hold his court in the city. In anticipation of the threatened trouble special constables were sworn in, and three troops of dragoons were stationed on the outskirts of the town. But the mayor of the city, though a man of high character, was physically weak and naturally irresolute, while the officer in command of the dragoons, Colonel Brereton, was afraid to use force even when it was the only means of preserving order. The timorous halting measures of the mayor and the commander of the troops cost the city dear.

The anticipated trouble declared itself as soon as Wetherell's carriage entered the town. It was greeted with volleys of stones as it passed through the streets, and threats against the life of the Recorder were hurled after him. The temper of the mob grew more and more threatening as the day wore on. The Recorder's court was interrupted and, as he passed to his quarters in the Mansion House, the special constables had a sharp fight to keep back the howling mob. In the evening the Mansion House was attacked, and Sir Charles only escaped with his life by climbing out upon the roof.

The troops were now brought into the city, the Riot Act was read three times, and the magistrate, after calling upon the rioters to disperse, ordered Brereton to clear the streets with his troops. It appears clear that strong measures

Bristol Quay in 1830

at this time would have quelled the riot. A captain of one of the troops of the 14th Dragoons who, acting upon his own authority, charged the mob and shot one of the ringleaders who was inciting the rioters to pelt the soldiers with bricks, soon dispersed the section of the mob with which he had to deal. Had Brereton acted with similar vigour, many lives and much property would doubtless have been saved. But weakness of character, or a fear that he would be held responsible for the consequences of strong action, paralysed him. He pandered to the mob, rode among them seeking to pacify them by soft words, called upon them to give three cheers for the king, and shook hands with the ringleaders. The leaders of the rioters were not slow to see the weakness of those in authority, nor were the worst elements among the crowd slow to profit by it.

On the next day, Brereton acted with almost incredible folly. He first withdrew the soldiers who were guarding the Mansion House. The building was at once stormed by the mob and the mayor had to escape by crawling over the roofs. Next, Brereton ordered the other two troops of the 14th Dragoons to leave the city. His reason was, forsooth, the rage of the rioters against the regiment because of the sharp treatment one of the troops had given them on the previous day. Reluctantly the troopers left the scene of disturbance, and the savage, criminal elements of the mob, who probably cared little for reform but much for plunder, saw a wealthy and populous city at their mercy. They hastened to give less fortunate comrades a chance of sharing in the anticipated harvest of plunder. The prisons of the city and county were stormed, the prisoners set free to swell the ranks of the rioters, and the buildings fired.

A dreadful time of pillage, of wild debauch and arson followed. The mob was unrestrained; it was, indeed, almost encouraged to proceed to still greater and greater lengths of disorder and violence. Brereton actually threatened to ride down the constables if they used their batons too freely in trying to save the bishop's palace from destruction. Again, the captain of a troop of

yeomanry, who brought his men into the town to try to restore order, paraded the streets for two hours seeking in vain for some one in authority who would empower him to act. Small wonder that the bishop's palace and the Mansion House were burnt, and that the plunderers burst into the warehouses and stupefied themselves with strong drink. Scores of rioters, plundering the upper rooms of the Customs House, were burnt to death when their drunken comrades fired the lower floors. Still more terrible was the fate of some who leapt from the windows on to the portico, upon which fell streamlets of molten lead from the roof of the flaming building. Down the streets ran rivers of fire, streams of blazing spirits from the vats of burning warehouses. Their swift flames licked the life out of many a hapless wretch who lay hopelessly drunk in the course of the fiery streams.

Fire and pillage worked their will in many places ; King Street and Princes Street were blazing, two sides of Queen Square were pillaged and fired during the night. Meanwhile, mayor and colonel were skulking under shelter ; Brereton, indeed, was in bed, though scarcely, one would think, asleep. At length in the early morning of next day the mayor sent orders, apparently to any officer who would undertake their execution, to take the most vigorous steps to quell the riot. The captain in charge—Brereton being presumably still in bed—refused to act without the presence of a magistrate. And no magistrate being available, the rioters were still left to plunder and madden themselves with drink, whilst the city was being burnt to ashes. Fortunately, the full calamity was averted. An officer who was staying in the town, a Major Mackworth, took upon himself the duties of those who had failed in their trust. He brought back the troops which Brereton had sent out of the city, and by force of character set them in action against the mob. The military forces were meanwhile being rapidly strengthened. Troops poured into the town from Gloucester and other places. In separate parties the soldiers charged down the streets with slash of sabres to right and left.

And almost as soon as the forces of order bared the sword, the riot crumpled into nothingness and the pillagers slunk away to hide in the courts and alleys of the town.

But the city had suffered severely from the brief reign of the mob. Hundreds—five hundred is the usual estimate—had perished by fire, by drink or by sabre stroke, and whole streets of the town lay in ashes. Punishment fell upon the rulers who had failed to rule, and upon the misguided wretches who had burst the just bonds of authority. The mayor, indeed, was acquitted after trial, but Brereton shot himself while his court-martial was going on. Of the rioters, four were hanged and nearly a hundred suffered less extreme punishments.

The Bristol Riots must have reminded many people then living of the excesses which marked the early years of the French Revolution. In other places, too, there were ominous signs of popular anger so bitter as to presage revolution if the Reform Bill were not passed. Fortunately, that calamity was averted by the passing of the Bill in 1832.

The reform of the system of representation in Parliament was naturally enough followed at no long interval by a reform in the government of the municipal boroughs. The corporations of these towns had come to be close bodies quite outside popular control. Many abuses resulted and public money was often squandered. The Municipal Reform Act of 1835 put the election of the members of the corporation in the hands of the burgesses, and thus secured popular control of the affairs of the old municipal towns such as Bristol, Gloucester, and Tewkesbury.

CHAPTER XLVII

LATER DAYS; CONCLUSION

The great changes of the nineteenth century, the application of steam to machinery and to transport by sea and land, have of course left their mark upon Gloucestershire in common with the rest of England. But in our county, fortunately, as we think, the change has been less sudden, the transition less startling than in many other counties of England.

Gloucestershire can no longer claim, as it could when the Cotswold towns sheltered the 'flower of the wool-merchants of England', and when Bristol was the second town in industry and commerce in England, a leading place among the commercial districts of our country. True, there has been an actual and considerable increase in the volume of its commerce, but in speed of growth it has been outstripped by other districts whose stores of coal and other mineral wealth far exceed the produce of the coal-fields of Bristol and the Forest of Dean.

Some time before the close of the eighteenth century Bristol had entered upon a period of decline, and her place as the second port of England had been taken by Liverpool. The rapid rise of Liverpool at the expense of Bristol was partly due to the greater advantages of its port for modern shipping and partly to the general trend of industry to the north. To some extent, however, it was due to the excessive charges levied at the port of Bristol, which were almost half as much again as the dues charged at Liverpool. Moreover, the gradual ruin of the West Indies, and especially of the sugar trade, was a great disaster to Bristol. Of late years, however, a wiser policy has to a great extent revived the trade of the port, and the ancient commercial town has recovered some at least of its lost ground.

Gloucester remains a thriving country town. The Gloucester and Berkeley Canal connects the city with the lower waters of the Severn and makes the town a port

with a fair amount of trade. Some part of the importance, which for centuries it derived from its position on the main route between London and South Wales, has been lost by the diversion of some of the railway traffic to shorter routes across the lower Severn by the Severn

THE 'BELL', TEWKESBURY

Bridge or under the waters of the estuary by the Severn Tunnel. Though still a busy provincial town, Gloucester has fallen comparatively from its high position of importance among English towns.

Tewkesbury is now a small country town of two main streets, which converge to form one as they approach the stately old Abbey Church. The numerous fine timbered houses, such as the 'Bell' Hotel opposite the Abbey—

famous as the house of Abel Fletcher in *John Halifax, Gentleman*—the 'Black Bear' at the other end of the town, and many other fine old buildings in the main street speak eloquently of the former thriving days of the place.

Of the modern towns, Cheltenham now depends less upon the merits of its mineral springs than upon its places of education, especially the College founded in 1840, and the very successful Ladies' College. Stroud, with some places in its neighbourhood, still provides employment for a number of persons in the woollen manufacture. The Gloucestershire cloth trade is, however, much less important than it was in the early part of the nineteenth century.

But Gloucestershire, outside Bristol, is essentially rural in character. The county has, in the main, escaped the scars upon the fair face of Nature and the sordid, ugly towns which industrial progress has developed in so many areas of our island. 'Gloucestershire,' says Bishop Creighton, 'keeps the records of England's normal growth, and enables us to judge what England would have been without the great inventions of machinery and means of transport which have given a new turn to modern industrial and social life.'

And some of us, at least, rejoice that the fair face of our county is not disfigured by the squalid evidences of rapid commercial progress. Still 'blest is the eye between Severn and Wye'; still the 'glassy, cool, translucent wave' of the Severn runs clear and full through lush pasture lands and fruitful orchards; still the unsullied air blows keenly yet kindly over the Cotswold uplands. And still enough of the ancient ways and ancient buildings remain in vale and forest and hill to link us with the days of old when men of our county played no small parts in the stirring story of our land. Surely in Gloucestershire there should be many who 'as they ramble along the Cotswold Hills and drop down upon the stately old towns that fringe their base, linger over the memories of the lesser England of the past, and wonder if things are always great in proportion to their size, or if life is always useful in proportion to its bustle'.

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